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Arbatov Discusses Impact of Armed Forces Cuts

PM0101150089 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 31 Dec 88 First Edition p 5

[Interview with Academician G.A. Arbatov, director of the United States of America and Canada Institute, by KRASNAYA ZVEZDA correspondent Captain 2d Rank V. Kocherov: "Disarmament and Security"—date, place not given]

[Text] [Kocherov] Judging by the reaction of the participants in the UN General Assembly session and the responses from abroad, M.S. Gorbachev's UN speech prompted a response equivalent, in my view, to that prompted by the first news of the upcoming elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. What is your opinion on this?

[Arbatov] Yes, M.S. Gorbachev's UN speech prompted a highly significant response in the United States and throughout the world. I can judge this not only from the press—I was in New York at the time, and I heard the reactions both from Americans and from representatives of other countries who were taking part in the UN General Assembly. I would like to make one correction to your assessment, however. M.S. Gorbachev's speech is probably being assessed as something even more significant than the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate- and Shorter-Range Missiles.

The commentaries, of which there are a great many now, identify two "sections" of the speech.

First, there is the philosophical, so to speak—that is to say, the concept of peace and international relations. That alone made a tremendous impression. Politicians and specialists—by no means all of whom share our views or even entertain any sympathies whatever toward socialism or the Soviet Union—are saying that the UN speech proposes the creation of a new type of international relations, and that the new concept set forth in it is an invitation to a complete break with the past and basically with the whole epoch of centuries of relations in which the right of might, and not the might of right, prevailed and in which armed force was an acknowledged, legitimized instrument of foreign policy and war was its continuation by other means.

The conceptual aspect of M.S. Gorbachev's speech was seen not only by the public, but also by many political and public figures in the United States and other Western countries as a major contribution of fundamental significance to the quest for a mutually acceptable political platform on which to build international relations that are advantageous to all, that will ensure peace, put an end to the arms race, and open up the way to cooperation in tackling problems common to all mankind.

The question of the need for deideologization of international relations was raised in M.S. Gorbachev's speech. This long overdue blow against the "infantile diseases" of leftism in foreign policy is not a concession, but on the contrary, a major offensive act—a party act in the profoundest sense, an act that meets the interests of socialism and the working class. This is because this concept raises to a new height the authority of our ideas, our policy, and our social system. Today this authority depends to a great degree on what, specifically, each social system can offer mankind and what paths to the future it opens up.

The second "section" of M.S. Gorbachev's speech is equally important. This is the statement on unilateral reductions in conventional arms and armed forces in Europe, and also in the Far East.

I would say that this decision by the Soviet leadership, which is important, even sensational, in its own right, also has enormous general political significance. It created the background, so to speak, against which the philosophy, the theoretical concept of our foreign policy, was illuminated in an entirely new way. Now even our worst enemies cannot say that this is all talk, all propaganda. Words have been confirmed with actions that are irrefutably convincing; actions that have confirmed in the best possible way not only the willingness, the desire, but the firm determination to advance toward the goals we have set ourselves.

This decision made a tremendous impression on the Western public. Some of my American interlocutors have called M.S. Gorbachev's speech the "Pearl Harbor of NATO policy," referring to the defeat that the United States suffered at the hands of Japan on that same date, 7 December, 47 years ago. True, I do not want to start talking in terms of victories or defeats for anyone here, except a victory for common sense. That victory has indeed happened and at a very important time. It is a time when the discussion on 50-percent cuts in nuclear weapons is being resumed (it is no secret that the West justifies its reluctance to cut these weapons in terms of Soviet conventional arms superiority), and also when, one may hope, the start of talks on reducing conventional arms and armed forces in Europe is approaching.

[Kocherov] It is well-known that our country is going to carry out the reduction in the Soviet Armed Forces and conventional arms on a unilateral basis. This is a graphic example of a demonstration of goodwill. Can we expect any constructive steps from the United States and NATO in response?

[Arbatov] The reduction in the Soviet Armed Forces and conventional arms is indeed a graphic demonstration of goodwill. Nothing is preventing the United States and NATO from responding with some equally constructive steps—we have set an example of readiness to demilitarize our relations with the United States and the West. And a good example is worth following. But these were indeed unilateral reductions. It was stressed in M.S. Gorbachev's speech itself that the reductions are not dependent on talks, and thus on countermeasures by the other side. Therefore, having taken this step, we have no intention of demanding analogous steps from the United States and NATO. However, I make no secret of the fact that I hope our unilateral initiative will have a major influence on the international situation. That's politics. The whole force of our unilateral steps is that they are in no way dependent on the other side's behavior, yet at the same time, as a rule, they have very important, I would even say substantive, political consequences.

[Kocherov] We know that there has already been one major unilateral reduction in the Soviet Armed Forces in our history. At that time the West did not respond to our goodwill step. Moreover, through its policy it dragged us into a new round of the arms race, which naturally had a negative effect on the Soviet Union's economic position. The editorial office is currently receiving a good many letters in which Soviet people recall this and express their anxiety. Are we repeating history?

[Arbatov] First, as to the West's response to our goodwill step in the past: It is true that they responded badly, unworthily to us. In the first half of the sixties the United States increased its armed forces by 270,000 men (11 percent).

The common justification then and now was, first, that even after the Soviet reduction and the American buildup, superiority was still on the side of the Soviet Union. Since I do not have at my disposal the Soviet figures on the then correlation of forces (they were and still are secret), I can neither confirm nor deny this assertion. Second, in the West this buildup was justified by the claim that N.S. Khrushchev, in cutting conventional arms beyond all measure, used nuclear arms as a bluff, asserting that we were churning out nuclear missiles "like sausages" (such statements were indeed made); carried out a nuclear explosion of the most monstrous might in Novaya Zemlya; and then sited missiles in Cuba, which led to the most dangerous international crisis in postwar times, all but bringing the world to the brink of nuclear disaster.

I have no doubt, however, that the then Soviet leader was not contemplating war. Rather, his actions were guided by fears that the United States could start an act of aggression, although the reaction to those fears was absurd, unjustified, and at times provocative.

Again, because of a lack of data, I will not express an opinion on how real was the need to respond with the buildup of our armed forces that began in the mid-sixties (in part it was associated not only with the situation in the West, but also in the East, with the deterioration in relations with the PRC). In this context I will not express an opinion as to which had the greater "negative effect on the Soviet Union's economic position," as you put it—America's buildup of its armed forces, or our own assessments of the situation and decisions in the sphere of military planning.

Let me observe, incidentally, that at the 19th all-union party conference the fact that we placed excessive reliance on military might as an instrument of ensuring our security and underestimated political means was mentioned as one of our main foreign policy errors in the stagnation period.

Now for the letters in which, as you say, Soviet people, remembering the lessons of history, "recall this and express their anxiety."

I understand Soviet people's concern for the country's security—I have seen for myself, experienced for myself (I was at the front at the age of 18) the outcome of unpreparedness for war. But I would like to put forward a few thoughts to reassure your readers.

First, their anxiety seems very premature to me. They do not yet know the correlation of forces between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, since we have not yet published the figures on this score. Soon—in all probability before the reduction of our armed forces begins—these figures will be made public, and then your readers will find it easier to form an idea of the true state of affairs. On the basis of the partial figures that have already been released from secrecy (on tanks, for instance) I have the impression that Soviet people will soon be starting to ask different questions, such as: Why is it that although we are not planning a war against other countries, we have more tanks and other types of conventional arms and armed forces than the West? And perhaps on certain types of arms people will wonder why we lag behind. In short, when the figures are published, there will be grounds for a serious, practical discussion.

Second, this time we are not planning to concern ourselves with quantity alone, as was the case with the reductions carried out before. It is a question of priorities in qualitative parameters of military building, of profound changes in military doctrine, strategy, and operational plans, as a result of which our defense will become stronger and surer and will be brought into line with real needs. And, unlike what happened in the late fifties and early sixties, the unilateral reductions will take place in combination with bilateral talks and changes (profound changes, we may hope) in the international situation.

Thus the unilateral reductions already announced will not, as far as one can judge from the available figures, lead to military laggardness for us. But I would prefer to put the question more broadly: Will reasonable sufficiency always and in all circumstances require us even to have numerical equality with the other side?

This question is very relevant. The United States and its allies have three or four times the economic potential and a considerably larger population. In spite of this we have hitherto tried to be at least equal in all parameters (with the possible exception of the Navy). And we have ourselves thereby suggested, so to speak, the most effective strategy for the struggle against the USSR and world socialism—imposing an arms race which would eventually exhaust and undermine us all economically. With the coming to power of the Reagan administration, this line was officially formulated in the concept of the "competition strategy."

This concept was based on rather stereotyped ideas of our political behavior and on the certainty that we would chase the other side without taking into account our potential, or sometimes even common sense. It seems to me that in this respect the unilateral reductions announced by the Soviet leader from the UN platform break that stereotype and basically mean that we are turning away from a "reactive" military policy, from automatic responses to the other side's actions, toward an independent and autonomous policy. And we are thereby taking away from the United States and NATO the keys to our defensive programs and military policy which they had previously had to some extent within their grasp.

I think that in military building, as in the economy, we had also spent a long time following the extensive cost-based path, relying primarily on quantity, not quality. And that is bad from the viewpoint not only of the economy, but also of security. Incidentally, some time ago we established a system that is by no means the best for our security; the bad tradition of keeping everything concerning defense, the Army, and weapons top secret. Later (and not only in our most terrible year, 1941) we came to realize that secrecy was often a cover for errors, wrong decisions, and sometimes downright muddleheadedness. Now the time when defense issues are above criticism is coming to an end. I think this can only benefit the people, their Armed Forces, and the state.

In connection with the proposed Armed Forces reductions, I would like to express just one reservation. From the experience of the large-scale unilateral reduction carried out in the early sixties we should, of course, learn how to conduct such measures in the proper way, without creating disorder or damaging the interests of Soviet servicemen. Their difficult work enjoys the deserved respect of the Soviet people. And there is no doubt that our people and our state, in carrying out the reduction of the Armed Forces, will show proper concern for their cadres—first and foremost officers—and will ensure that the system is such that those officers who are discharged to the reserve will suffer neither material nor moral losses. I am sure that everything will be done in this way. Here, it seems to me, a major debate on the matter, and of other aspects of the conversion, could help. And that includes a debate in the pages of your newspaper. If such a debate begins, I would be glad to take part.

The fundamental importance of the Soviet initiatives does not only lie in the fact that the reductions being made by the Soviet Union are very substantial in quantitative terms. The qualitative aspect is perhaps even more significant. Because the first major step has been taken toward a restructuring of the war machine that will considerably strengthen it, make its defense potential absolutely reliable, and at the same time remove the other side's grounds for fears concerning our offensive potential. All this gives the Soviet initiative a special political force. But of course, we should all realize that this is only a first step, the first actions. And it goes without saying that we still have to think and work a great deal on further restructuring in the defense sphere in the light of the dynamics of international relations, the situation in our economy, and other factors.

[Kocherov] The new year is approaching. Has the outgoing year had its tasks of lessening military confrontation on the planet fulfilled? What can we expect from next year in this respect?

[Arbatov] I think the outgoing year will leave a deep imprint on mankind's memory as regards the lessening of military confrontation. The elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles began. The Soviet Union launched initiatives on a substantial unilateral reduction in its Armed Forces. Some progress was achieved at several groups of disarmament talks. The political climate improved, which always helps to slow down the arms race.

Next year will, I hope, continue, consolidate, and develop these successes, although I know well that by no means everyone wants this. In particular, by all appearances the wish to put a brake on the talks on a 50-percent reduction in strategic offensive arms prevails at present in U.S. political circles. Talks on the reduction of conventional arms and armed forces are spoken of over there as a very long, drawn-out affair. But this makes the initiative put forward by us as the year draws to a close all the more important. It seems to me that it could act as a catalyst for sentiments that have long been growing among the public (and also in the realistically minded section of the ruling circles): We must stop the "cold war;" we must halt the arms race, especially since insuperable economic imperatives push us in that direction too. Not only for small countries, and not only for the Soviet Union, but even for the richest country in the world—the United States—the intensive military rivalry that marked the last decade has proved beyond their powers, and this has had some effect on the sentiments of Americans. It is no accident that the budget deficit and the huge state debt have become the number one priorities in America for the newly elected president.

So all this taken together allows us to look to the future with a degree of hope and optimism, albeit with caution—even as regards relations with the United States. In practice the new political thinking and the new policy have greatly widened our potential, even, if you like, our choice. I think that in other areas too (I have in mind, in particular, our relations with the PRC, Western Europe, and perhaps Japan too) next year could bring significant positive results. That is how I would answer your last question.

In conclusion please convey my new year congratulations to KRASNAYA ZVEZDA readers and Army and Navy servicemen.

Pact-NATO 'Mandate' Talks Held in Vienna

30 Dec Meeting

LD3012114188 Moscow TASS in English 1135 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] Vienna December 30 TASS—A regular meeting within the framework of consultations between representatives of the Warsaw Treaty member states and NATO to elaborate a mandate of future talks on armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals was held here today.

2 Jan Meeting

LD0201101389 Moscow TASS in English 1007 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Vienna January 2 TASS—A meeting was held here today within the framework of consultations between representatives of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO states to elaborate the mandate of future negotiations on troops and conventional armaments in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals.

Nuclear 'Compensation' Termed 'Utterly Absurd'

LD3112094888 Moscow TASS in English 0814 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] Moscow December 31 TASS—By TASS military writer Vladimir Chernyshev: One can say most confidently now that reduction in conventional armaments and armed forces of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty in Europe is a key issue of the work for disarmament. Its solution or, as minimum, tangible progress on this issue will contribute toward advancement in other major directions of disarmament.

Proceeding from this, the USSR and other Warsaw Treaty states work persistently for getting the talks on reducing armed forces and armaments in a wide geographical zone from the Atlantic to the Urals to be started without delay.

Without waiting for the beginning of these negotiations with the NATO countries, the Soviet Union gets down to the unilateral cuts in its armed forces and armaments, which was announced by Mikhail Gorbachev from the United Nations rostrum. These unilateral measures should provide a fresh impetus to the process of scaling down military confrontation in Europe, allow a decisive headway to be made toward elaborating meaningful agreements already at the first stage of the negotiations.

Actually, they create a new political context around the talks, hampering the manoeuvres by those quarters in the West that do not wish a curb on the arms race. The steps taken by the USSR are a kind of an advance at future talks, a solid contribution to European disarmament, the first donation to the cause of building a "common European home".

Certainly, the unilateral reduction in Soviet troops and armaments will be carried out independently of the future talks and the USSR does not attach any preconditions to its steps. At the same time, these steps surely cannot fail to affect the results of the first stage of the forthcoming talks, which envisages a correction of imbalances and asymmetries, since they will make a considerable change in the present correlation of military forces in Europe.

Besides, by its actions our country sets a good example to its partners even before the beginning of the talks and, naturally, expects retaliatory measures on the part of the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty as a whole. They also could slash their conventional armaments in Europe, especially those of them in which there is an imbalance in their favour.

For instance, if one is to pursue the logic of adjusting imbalances, NATO could move toward cutting back its attack tactical aviation. It is perfectly clear that it is the parties to the North Atlantic Alliance themselves that should make a decision. But what is important is that the measures effected by us are not only of great military significance but also are a major political step. For this reason we are justified in expecting initiatives from the other side, which will be adequate in significance.

The Soviet Union also holds that our initiatives should be instrumental to advancing toward nuclear disarmament, including toward the beginning of talks on reducing tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. It is obvious that movement toward cutting back conventional armaments and armed forces in central Europe, lending a strictly defensive nature to the troops stationed there clears away all grounds for retaining tactical nuclear systems in military arsenals and actually renders meaningless the reasoning of the "nuclear deterrence" advocates.

Of course the attempts by definite NATO quarters to plan "re-armament" in the nuclear field, "compensation" by some or other means for the U.S. intermediate-range missiles which are destroyed under the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty look utterly absurd now.

Present Military Doctrine Called 'Defensive'

LD3012183088 Moscow TASS in English 1819 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] Moscow December 30 TASS—By TASS military writer Vladimir Chernyshev:

The main specific features of the USSR's present military doctrine are its defensive character, orientation at resolving the tasks of averting war, the principles of sufficiency for defense. It is absolutely clear that no matter what public assurances on peaceful intentions and defensive character of the doctrine are made, they would hardly sound convincingly if all this is not borne up by concrete tangible steps of a state in the area of its military policy, that is in the development of the armed forces and armaments, their structure and deployment.

The Soviet Union takes an initial step toward the restructuring of its military forces fully in accordance with the provisions of the new military doctrine. As Mikhail Gorbachev announced, the numerical strength of the Soviet Armed Forces will be reduced by 500,000 men. The Soviet armaments in the European part of the USSR and the territory of its allies will be reduced by 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems, 800 combat aircraft.

It is particularly important that alongside large-scale reductions of forces and armaments, qualitative changes will be made in the armed forces, above all in the area of contact with NATO forces—in central Europe. The following measures will be carried out for this purpose: six tank divisions will be withdrawn from the groups of the Soviet forces in the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary to be disbanded (and not deployed anywhere else). Soviet divisions remaining on the territory of the allies will be reorganized through withdrawing a large number of tanks from their composition (consequently, a strictly defensive structure will be imparted to them). Assault-landing units and assault-crossing units with their armaments and combat equipment will be withdrawn from the Soviet groups of forces.

All this will ensure the restructuring of forces on the forward lines in such a way as to preclude their use in large-scale surprise offensive operations. As a result, the numerical strength and volume, composition, deployment and other parameters of troops and armaments will suit defense purposes only, and will not be provoking concern of the other side for its own security.

The Soviet Union clearly demonstrates the seriousness of its intentions. It shows that its words about the restructuring of the armed forces and conventional armaments on the principles of sufficiency, on a strictly defensive military doctrine do not run counter to practical deeds, shows that theoretical substantiation of the defensive military doctrine has already passed on to concrete practice of military development.

Forming a zone with a lowered level of armaments on the side of the Warsaw Treaty in the area of contact between armed forces of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO, the zone from which a substantial amount of conventional armaments viewed as offensive are withdrawn, the Soviet Union removes the reasons for concern of definite circles in West European countries about the character of the group of Soviet forces. This approach must promote the task of restructuring international relations, of the consolidation of military-political stability in Europe and the whole world.

Karpov Views Progress of Chemical Weapons Talks

PM2812140188 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 28 Dec 88 Morning Edition p 4

["IZVESTIYA Interview" with V.P. Karpov, USSR deputy foreign minister, by correspondent S. Dardykin: "How Are the Talks Going?"—place, date not given; first paragraph is an introduction]

[Text] A convention on a complete ban on chemical weapons, which are known as "the poor man's nuclear weapons," could have been signed either last year or this year. Will it be signed next year? Will its signing be brought any nearer by the international conference due to open in Paris in January? This was the topic of a conversation between IZVESTIYA's correspondent and V.P. Karpov, USSR deputy foreign minister.

[Dardykin] Viktor Pavlovich, it was about 18 months ago here, inside our respected foreign policy department, that I heard it said: All opportunities are present for signing a convention on chemical weapons as early as 1988. As far as I can understand, the formula still remains the same, the only difference being a postponement until next year. It is said that it will be the decisive year.

[Karpov] Yes indeed, about a year ago we felt that we were on the threshold of elaborating the final text of the document and would be able to sign the convention in the next few months. Unfortunately, this was not to be. Why? Primarily, I think, because 1988 proved to be a year of very serious advance in other disarmament spheres, and mainly the beginning of the implementation of the treaty on intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles. On the other hand, the year also produced what I would describe as attendant difficulties—the U.S. presidential election, for example, and also the development of the situation in Europe—the NATO countries were elaborating their political and strategic tenets for the future. In other words, attention was being constantly diverted from the preparation of the convention on chemical weapons.

[Dardykin] Was there not another factor involved? People got the impression that chemical weapons somehow ended up on the fringes of political and public interest. Everyone knows about nuclear weapons: They pose a real threat. Politicians and the public alike focused attention mainly on them. But what about chemical weapons? Having experienced the horror of their use back in World War I, mankind seems to have accepted them and has lived for 7 decades now without any special alarm being caused by the fact of their existence. Could it be true that the threat is not so great?

[Karpov] In my view, this is incorrect. It is by no means an accident that chemical weapons are known as "the poor man's nuclear weapons." They are much cheaper to produce than nuclear weapons and, given the existence of a sufficiently developed chemical industry, much simpler. At the same time, they are not all that far behind nuclear weapons in terms of their lethal effect, and since their action is instantaneous, protection against them is extremely difficult— especially when talking about binary weapons when two components, sometimes totally innocuous on their own, are combined during the explosion and turn into a mass destruction medium. Their composition and chemical formulas are constantly varied, making it necessary to constantly improve defense methods. They sometime cannot keep up the pace.

[Dardykin] Are there any estimates by specialists regarding the stockpiles of chemical weapons in the world? It is often mentioned that there are about 20 countries which either have them or could have them.

[Karpov] There are no accurate data. As far as we are concerned, we can say: We have 50,000 tonnes of chemical weapons. This is actually the quantity of toxic substances, discounting what could be called the "hardware." Estimates for the United States vary between 100,000 and 300,000 tonnes. The Americans themselves do not disclose any figures.

[Dardykin] Do they accept our estimates of our own stockpiles?

[Karpov] No. They do not publicize their own estimates of Soviet stockpiles, but they also doubt the veracity of ours. Even though we are prepared to open up or stocks for inspection. As soon as the convention is concluded, we will open up all our storage dumps to international inspection.

The Americans are unwilling to reveal the nature and volume of their stockpiles evidently because they have resumed the production of chemical weapons following a lengthy break. We have halted our production and have no intention of resuming it. It may have taken some time, but we have made this decision.

[Dardykin] But why did this delay occur?

[Karpov] In my view, a kind of inertia was in operation. An inertia in thinking. Back in 1969, the United States under President Nixon had built up sufficiently solid stockpiles of chemical weapons and took the step of halting production. That was done unilaterally, without demanding reciprocity of anyone. This gesture created a very strong impression. We, on the other hand, continued production until the spring of last year....

[Dardykin] ...And thus became the target of political reproaches?

[Karpov] Absolutely correct. Judging by the fact that we now have 50,000 tonnes, the volume of production was not all that great. But the very fact that we continued production operated against us. The accusing finger was being pointed at us: Look everybody, the Americans have ceased producing chemical weapons while the Russians are continuing.

[Dardykin] What a paradox. We were saying louder than anyone else that these weapons are barbaric, that their use is impermissible and inhuman, and yet we were building up stockpiles of them. You spoke of inertia. But people could not have just forgotten that we were producing chemical weapons. I think that someone must have been behind this decision. It would be very interesting to know his or their motives. Could it have been that they wanted to catch up with America also in this sphere?

[Karpov] Of course there were people who stood up for the production of chemical weapons. We know that decisions like these were not always made with due consideration for statewide interests. The reasons given were extremely noble. Make up the gap. Renew stockpiles as a counterbalance to the American stockpiles. Enhance the country's defense capability in this way. In reality, the very fact that chemical weapons were being produced was, I repeat, used against our political interests. It did take time, but we did find the strength to take a sober look at this, and we acted wisely.

[Dardykin] Seeing that we are back to the present state of affairs, let us pick up our initial topic. Were the last 12-18 months totally fruitless as regards advance toward a convention on the complete ban of chemical weapons?

[Karpov] No, this time was not wasted. We created in Shikhany, as did the Americans in Tooele, experimental facilities for the destruction of chemical weapons. We managed to show these facilities to each other and to the other partners at the talks. The Soviet Union is building an even more powerful experimental facility in Chapayevsk. It will in all likelihood be ready by spring and we will be able to embark on working out the technology for the destruction of chemical weapons. Here we count on exchange of experience with other states so that effective technology for the destruction of toxic substances, which is simultaneously safe for people and the environment, might be available from the moment the convention is signed.

The positive change in the French stance at the talks is another equally important factor. Previously it contained elements that hindered agreement. One of them was the idea of so-called "minimum security stocks." It was a matter of allowing certain states to maintain production of chemical weapons even after the convention was signed. The outcome would have been a process of destruction on the one hand, accompanied on the other hand by a process of production and renewal of that selfsame "security stock."

[Dardykin] The French had probably produced some arguments in support of such an approach?

[Karpov] They argued along these lines. The countries whose stocks of chemical weapons were smaller than, say, those of the Soviet Union and the United States (including France itself) should not remain defenseless as these stocks were destroyed. Hence, it was claimed, France should have some minimum stock so that anyone daring to attack it would know that it has the means to retaliate. Such a concept of the destruction of chemical weapons did not fit in with... the concept of the destruction of chemical weapons. Due credit must be given to President Mitterrand's political wisdom: He embarked on changing the former approach and adopting the formula upheld by the Soviet Union and many Western participants in the Geneva talks, namely: Production of chemical weapons would cease following the conclusion of the convention and stockpiles will be destroyed under international verification. It was, of course, also necessary to elaborate procedures ensuring equal security for all states. On this subject we have no differences at all either with France or with anyone else. For example, the really major chemical powers could reduce their arms in greater quantities.

[Dardykin] The elaboration of any agreement is a process of aligning the sides' positions until they meet at a point that is acceptable to all. Obviously, our own position has also undergone changes?

[Karpov] Certainly. The Soviet position also underwent serious development, as regards, for example, the question of exchanging initial data. I already mentioned that we published figures about our stockpiles. Second: We are ready to conduct a series of verification experiments right now, without waiting for the convention to be concluded, including the most complex issue—the way to verify civilian industry so as to prevent the possibility of chemical weapons being developed in secret. This is where complications arise. On the one hand, there must be maximum guarantees against the convention being breached—in other words, the chemical industry must rigorously monitored. On the other hand, private firms in the West are unwilling to have someone penetrating their commercial and manufacturing secrets under the guise of inspection.

[Dardykin] We probably ought to be proud that Western firms perceive us as competitors.

[Karpov] Not so much us, but each other. This is, after all, a matter of international verification. This is a serious problem—how to ensure reliable verification and at the same time protect against outsiders' curiosity within, of course, the framework of reasonable commercial and industrial secrecy.

[Dardykin] Has any formula been developed yet?

[Karpov] We suggested a series of experiments in order to work out all these issues. At the first stage, each state participating in the talks will nominate at its discretion one or two enterprises liable to future verification, enterprises, in fact, that produce substances capable of providing the basis for the manufacture of chemical weapons. At the first stage, they are the ones which must become the object of study first by national forces, in other words a government organization or some other national organization. We have nominated one such enterprise in Dzerzhinsk, and our specialists are analyzing ways in which it could be monitored by international inspection. Similar experiments have been announced in the FRG, Britain, and several other countries. It is planned to exchange the material obtained thereby. The second stage already involves the exchange of inspection groups. We offered such cooperation to the FRG, for example. Finally, at the third stage, there will be trials of an international verification system which could later be legally enshrined.

[Dardykin] What is the problem preventing the setting of an approximate date for signing the convention right now? Is it likely that the situation will remain unchanged in a year's time? The basic work has been done, but as for technical details....

[Karpov] So far we cannot either set a date or lay on the table a document that has been worked out in every detail. Some 80 and even 85 percent of the convention's text has been agreed. The remaining points are verification and the final procedure for destruction of chemical weapons. We still have to agree whether all signatories of the future convention will start destroying them simultaneously, or whether destruction at the first stage will be only by those who have the largest stocks. We then have the question of whether it is necessary to set some deadlines for leveling the chemical weapons potentials—for example, whether all the main owners of chemical weapons should be in a position of equality after the 1st 8 years of the 10-year period, which is assumed to cover the entire process of destruction. In principle, we agree to such an approach. But it still has to be formulated.

An international conference is due to be held in Paris in early January on strengthening the regime of the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning the use of chemical weapons. When this idea first came up, we had to answer the question: What will be the objective of this conference? Will it help the earlier conclusion of the convention? The countries that have signed the Geneva Protocol—there are 112 of them now—have in principle always condemned the use of chemical weapons. But the protocol makes no provision for measures guaranteeing its observance. It has not always been observed, chemical weapons have still been used.

[Dardykin] Do you mean the Iran-Iraq war?

[Karpov] Yes, as well as others. Therefore, the point is to convene the conference and thus attract attention to to the urgency of the problem and the need to solve it radically now, without any delay. If chemical weapons are allowed to proliferate the situation might get out of control and produce a greater likelihood of conflicts making extensive use of chemical weapons. This is why, when U.S. President R. Reagan and President F. Mitterrand of France put forward the idea of convening this conference, we gave our support. According to reports from Paris, more countries than just the signatories of the 1925 Protocol have expressed a desire to send delegations. This shows that states realize the urgent need for rigorous measures against chemical weapons.

It is important to ensure that the conference is held not in the spirit of clarifying attitudes, not in the spirit of seeking the culprits of various specific uses of chemical weapons. No, like most countries, we condemn any use of chemical weapons. We believe that what is needed is an appropriate international investigative mechanism to rule out any such occurrences in the future—and it would be most sensible to set it up within the UN framework. But the main point is that the upcoming conference must speak out in favor of a complete ban of chemical weapons and destruction of stockpiles, in favor of accelerating the signing of the convention. We are very hopeful in this regard.

Shevardnadze Addresses Consular Workers Meeting

PM3012153088 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 30 Dec 88 Morning Edition p 4

[TASS report: "Restructuring and the Tasks of the Soviet Consular Service"]

[Text] A conference of USSR Foreign Ministry consular workers was held in Moscow 27-28 December. A report was delivered by E.A. Shevardnadze, member of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo and USSR foreign minister.

We pin great hopes, he said, on the first conference in the history of the Soviet consular service, because we expect it to herald a new stage in the restructuring of the work of our diplomatic department.

The main subject on the agenda is the consular service and restructuring, the restructuring of the consular service in light of the 19th all-union party conference decisions and M.S. Gorbachev's speech at the 43d UN General Assembly session.

Our consular service was 70 years old in October. V.I. Lenin was present at its birth. That is a good reason to check our present practice against the provisions of Lenin's decree on consuls.

The consular service must be given back its status and function as one of the main instruments of foreign policy and an integral part of the diplomatic service.

Analysis of the work of the consular service uncovers serious flaws. Chief among them is disregard for what is customarily called the human factor, the human dimension. A service which deals first and foremost with man, with people who have the most need of professional protection of their interests in the difficult conditions of a foreign country, has been dehumanized—both in its internal structures, and in their outward manifestations.

The humanization of the consular service, both in the sense of staffing it with top grade personnel, and from the viewpoint of attention toward the main target of its operations—man—is one of the main objectives of its restructuring.

The standard and quality of the service's activity, the minister stressed, should reflect and express the standard and quality of the processes of renewal, democratization, and openness in conducting affairs that are taking place in the country. This has not yet happened. The consular service in its present form is holding back our intraministry restructuring, and in wider terms it is damaging to state interests.

The consular service has become the target of justified criticism from the Soviet public.

Three times at its sessions the ministry collegium has examined questions of the work of the consular administration and consular institutions abroad.

Since then much has changed. The leadership personnel of the service has grown stronger, monitoring of the activity of consular institutions has been stepped up, and more than 50 reports have been heard from their leaders. And all the same, there have yet to be any radical improvements.

Among other factors behind the unfavorable state of affairs, the minister mentioned the absence of an integrated conceptual view of the consular service and the forms and methods of its work in present-day conditions.

First and foremost the principles of consular activity should be brought directly into line with the fundamental principles of the new political thinking and the priorities of restructuring international relations.

One cannot live and work as if the functions of consular institutions did not take account of the objectives of the attainment of world consensus, the priority of the values common to all mankind, the deideologization of international relations, the primacy of right, the supremacy of the law, the move away from confrontation and toward dialogue and cooperation, freedom of choice, civilization in contact between states, and ecological and economic cooperation.

The events taking place in the world are ridding us of our old garb and furnishing us with a new form and new means of operation. An illustration of this is the earthquake in Armenia, the shocks of which shook and destroyed the wall of isolation from the rest of the world. The earthquake did enormous damage and caused colossal losses, but at the same time it opened up to the world a new face of the country and people, their indivisibility from mankind's fate.

In these emergency conditions our diplomatic service, including the consular service, did remarkable work.

But these are events of international significance and scale. Yet in day-to-day practice emergencies on a different scale arise—on a scale of one or a few human lives. And here consular inadequacy is most often revealed.

The humanitarian aspect of consular work has grown weak, although it cannot be said that our consular service does not seek to have its say in the international dialogue on human rights, exchanges, and the problems of reuniting families and of mixed marriages.

It seeks to do so, but is rather timid.

In the 18 October 1918 decree on consuls V.I. Lenin formulated the demand for "careful study of the most important aspects and events in the economic and social life of a given country and regular notification to the worker-peasant government of the results of such study."

In the light of this demand the consular worker is not a clerk, not a civil servant, but a politician. But today the political aspect of consular work has been eroded.

The major, most important policy of consular practice is to know, study, and summarize experience that is of interest to us and to ensure that people in consular districts know what is happening in the Soviet Union, what policy it pursues in international affairs, and what opportunities our restructuring opens up for organizing cooperation, exchanges, and contacts.

Restructuring in the consular service should have just one task—to respond more rapidly, more fully, and more competently to the needs and requirements of restructuring in the country and help to resolve the tasks facing Soviet society.

The greatest danger for our consular service lies in lagging behind the times, behind the dynamics of our internal processes. This must be said if only because blind adherence to all kinds of instructions and codes which are, as a rule, of a departmental nature is perhaps more deeply rooted in the consular service than anywhere else.

The revision of the old normative documents has begun, but this work cannot be completed in a week or two. Therefore, in their practical work the comrades are instructed to be guided by the country's Constitution and laws, and also by statements made at the highest political level.

In present-day conditions special significance is attached to the protection of the economic, legal, and social interests of USSR citizens and their associations abroad.

The times are sharply increasing the responsibility of the consular service for removing obstacles in the path of the development of trade and economic ties with foreign partners. First and foremost the consular institutions themselves should give recommendations concerning the expediency of deals, the creation of joint enterprises, and the establishment of direct ties. Within the bounds of their competence they should promote the exchange of information and facilitate business travel.

We ask consular workers to open their doors to Soviet citizens living permanently abroad—there are more than 150,000 of them now—and to turn their face to them, and make it a welcoming face. Because for them, that face is the face of the motherland.

Devoting great attention to legal aspects of the consular service, the speaker noted the weakness of the legal training of many of its workers.

It is inadequate to have a perception of the law that ignores the fact that in interstate relations, international law operates and affairs between sovereign entities can be conducted only on the basis of that law.

Clearly we should consider, the minister said, whether we have made a mistake by not adhering to the 1963 Vienna convention on consular relations. The policy of creating a different rule—that of bilateral consular conventions—has done no good, and has probably only complicated our consular activity.

Having proclaimed a course of the universalization of international organizations and the priority of common human values, we cannot but acknowledge a convention to which 125 states are parties.

The situation must be rectified.

The expansion of the Soviet state's foreign ties, the increase in trips abroad by USSR citizens, and the growth in the number of foreigners visiting our country on business, scientific, cultural, and private affairs also require a radical renewal of the existing rules, norms, forms, and methods of consular activity.

E.A. Shevardnadze put forward ideas on the possibility of expanding the rights of union republics in the sphere of international activity, and in particular in the sphere of consular representation.

E.A. Shevardnadze said in conclusion: The conference has provided very rich material on the basis of which we will now be able to formulate a general outline of the Soviet consular service.

Much work lies ahead to summarize and analyze this material.

For all its defects and shortcomings, our consular service and the majority of its subunits are doing great and very necessary work. In complex and sometimes very difficult conditions the comrades work selflessly to protect the interests of the state and Soviet people.

The work of the conference took place at plenary sessions and in five sections.

The plenary sessions were addressed by B.V. Kravtsov, USSR minister of justice; V.M. Vinogradov, RSFSR foreign minister; V.V. Tereshkova, chairman of the Union of Soviet Friendship Societies Presidium; F.D. Bobkov, first deputy chairman of the KGB; V.A. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR foreign minister; I.D. Ivanov, deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers State

Foreign Economic Commission; V.K. Mikuchyauskas, Lithuanian SSR foreign minister; A.S. Yeliseyev, chairman of the "Rodina" Society Presidium; and others.

1989 China Summit 'Important Political Event'

PM3112144488 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 31 Dec 88 p 5

[Article by international affairs journalist Aleksandr Bovin under the general heading "New York—Moscow": "Speculating Without a Fortune-Teller"]

[Text] It seems to me that the main, most important political event of 1989 will be the Soviet-Chinese summit meeting. I write this rather forcefully, because, in my view, in our system of foreign policy priorities China should rank "above" America.

It is not a question of restoring alliance relations between the Soviet Union and China. That prospect would run counter to both countries' course of reducing the significance of the bloc factor in world politics. But be that as it may, the full normalization of Soviet-Chinese relations on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence and the establishment of interparty ties will substantially change the political landscape not only in Asia, but throughout the world.

I am sure that neither Moscow nor Beijing regards improving Soviet-Chinese relations as a means of exerting pressure on any third country—the United States, for instance, or Japan.

The second most important event of next year, on my scale, is the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Unfortunately it took nearly 10 years, it took thousands of deaths, enormous material costs, a fall in our country's prestige, and the exacerbation of the international atmosphere to understand—to understand not in theory, but in practice—that all peoples have to decide their own fate, without outside interference. This conclusion is drawn not because we proved powerless to change the natural course of events in another country. This conclusion is drawn because the very attempt to change that course of events was mistaken in principle.

I realize how hard it is for those who fought in Afghanistan to accept that view. But the bitter truth is all the same better, more useful, than an "elevating deception." The officers and men who fought in Afghanistan were true to their oath and fulfilled their soldierly duty. They have the right to wear their awards. And they have earned the motherland's care and gratitude.

And finally, event number three is the start of talks between the North Atlantic alliance and the Warsaw Pact on reducing conventional arms and armed forces in Europe. As I understand it, the significance of these talks (in anticipation that they will bear fruit) exceeds the significance of the Soviet-American talks on a 50-percent cut in strategic offensive arms. First, because the latter talks are following a well-worn track and even if they are not completed in 1989—the possible "Bush effect"—certainly will be in 1990. Second, because the most real danger of a new spiral of the arms race relates first and foremost to conventional, nonnuclear weapons. It is in this sphere, by increasing the "intelligence" of the means of destruction, that the Pentagon could try to forge ahead. The successful course of talks on reducing conventional arms could facilitate the attainment of an accord to bar the way to the creation of a new generation of weapons.

Roundtable on U.S. Relations, Arms Control

LD0101212589 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1230 GMT 1 Jan 89

["International Observers Roundtable" program with Igor Pavlovich Charikov, All-Union Radio commentator; PRAVDA political observer Gennadiy Vladimirovich Vasilyev; and IZVESTIYA political observer Vitaliy Ivanovich Kobysh]

[Text] [Announcer] Now it is time for "International Observers Roundtable." In the chair is All-Union Radio commentator, Igor Pavlovich Charikov.

[Charikov] Hello, esteemed comrades. Today is 1 January, the first day of the new year, and we—the participants in this year's first edition of the "Observers Roundtable"—would like to cordially wish you a happy new year. My guests today are PRAVDA political observer Gennadiy Vladimirovich Vasilyev, and IZVESTIYA political observer Vitaliy Ivanovich Kobysh. I am sure they are both very familiar to you through their interesting analytical articles and numerous books. We have agreed that during this first broadcast in 1989 we will try to look into the future and attempt to link past events with the future prospects for the world situation. After all, as the well-known truth says, to understand the present correctly and to take a closer look at the future you need to know recent history. So in this sense we will be taking what we consider to be the most important events of 1988 as our starting point.

There is no doubt at all that last year brought a certain easing of tension in the world, that there were concrete improvements in East-West relations as a whole, and between the Soviet Union and the United States specifically. Ways of settling regional conflicts have also emerged. In his new year address to the Soviet people, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev stressed that the outgoing year will remain in our memories as one of great changes for the better in international relations, and that a lot of the credit for this goes to our state, which is acting on the world stage in the spirit of the new political thinking.

Of course, said Comrade Gorbachev, there are shadows of the past in world politics, but they are already fading and a new vision of the world is becoming established. Many political scientists believe that the cold war is beginning to recede and that it is being replaced by a period of constructive dialogue. This was confirmed in conversations I had last year with Academician Arbatov and the U.S. professor, Galbraith. Naturally, this does not mean that there will be no problems in the incoming year. To quote from Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev's new year's address again, there are many serious affairs and concerns ahead.

Just before the turn of the year there was another event that we are going to talk about and recall more than once today, of course, and that is Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev's speech to the delegates of the 43d session of the UN General Assembly. The initiatives contained in that speech, which the latest issue of U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT has called epoch-making, have set political circles throughout the world in motion and caused statesmen and public figures—and I am not exaggerating—to reassess the processes under way and to reflect, in the most serious way, about the future prospects for world politics.

As I said, we will be coming back to that speech, but for the moment I would like to recall an important anniversary that falls in just 2 weeks time and has a very direct connection with the past year: the statement by Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, of 15 January 1986. That document is a sweeping program for the gradual reduction and eventual elimination, by the beginning of the 21st century, of all nuclear weapons. It was a program that caused a real sensation in world politics. In an overwhelming majority, all thinking people appreciated the Soviet initiative, its humane essence, and objectives at their true value. There were, of course, skeptics and opponents. It was 3 years ago, after all, when there were not very many supporters of the new political thinking that is now gradually gaining ground. I recall that one of the virtues of the Soviet initiative put forward by Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev noticed by many observers—Soviet and foreign—was its concrete and, most importantly, realistic nature. I think this realistic nature was embodied 2 years later in the signing of a document between two nuclear powers, which for the first time in human history, scraps a class of nuclear weapons.

[Vasilyev] Incidentally, when the news of that statement spread across the world I was in New York, working as PRAVDA's U.S. correspondent, and it is true that the reaction to the statement was far from simple. On the one hand, there was approval from everyone with any sense, and on the other, there was irony from the skeptics. To many people at that time a plan for eliminating nuclear weapons worldwide seemed an impossibe dream, a utopia. But interestingly enough, 3 years later—not such a lengthy period in historical terms—we are seeing this plan in a different light. Today we see it as a difficult, but nevertheless feasible, task. I think the main reason for this is that the first practical step has already been taken in this direction—that is, the signing of the Soviet-U.S. intermediate- and shorter-range missile treaty and the commencement of its implementation.

[Charikov] Yes, you are absolutely right, Gennadiy Vladimirovich. It was not easy to achieve that treaty, particularly since the new thinking was still carving out a path for itself. We remember the frenzied attacks that were launched against that Washington treaty—we sometimes call it the Washington treaty among ourselves—how many frenzied attacks there were right up to its ratification, and even now. Despite all this, the treaty came into force 6 months after it was signed and we are now witnessing a process of genuine disarmament.

[Kobysh] This is a lengthy process. There are still lots of things to be surmounted along the way and we will mention these problems later. Since you have already touched on the 1989 calendar, Igor Pavlovich, I will recall some other dates. The Cuban people, and with them everyone you could call people of goodwill, advanced mankind, and I would say simply intelligent and honest people, are today celebrating the 30th anniversary of the victory of the great Cuban revolution—the victory of a small people not over Batista, but, in effect, over the great United States of America. Also this year, on 19 July, the victory of the Nicaraguan Sandinistan revolution will be 10 years old. It is a victory which is by no means final; the Nicaraguans are having to fight even now, blood is being shed there, and we should not forget this for a single moment. There are also other anniversary dates in 1989. 20 January is the 40th anniversary of the promulgation of the fourth point of the Truman Doctrine, aimed at stepping up the penetration of U.S. capital in the colonial and dependent countries. It is distressing and unpleasant for me to talk on the subject, but that fourth point is in fact still in force, even today. Finally, 4 April will be a very topical anniversary for us Europeans....

[Charikov] A black day.

[Kobysh] A black day. It was on 4 April 1949 that the NATO bloc was established, marking the beginning of a very great deal that has placed mankind on the brink of extinction.

[Vasilyev] Since you have been listing dates, Viktor Ivanovich, I cannot remain silent, as they say, and ought to mention one more approaching date. You mentioned 20 January, but that is also the day when the new U.S. President, George Bush, takes office. I think this is a date worthy of attention because Soviet-American relations are a major component of the overall state of world affairs and a great deal depends on the conduct of the new administration—not only in bilateral relations but also in the future world situation. Generally, since we are discussing the new year, I would like to remind you that according to Chinese mythology, 1989 is the year of the wise serpent. I would like to emphasize the word 'wise,' for wisdom is what we need in our restless, multifaceted, multicolored, contradictory, and mutually dependent world.

[Kobysh] Well, since you've brought up the subject of wisdom, let's be frank and say that everyone is now asking, of course, just how wise the new U.S. Administration will be in continuing the policies of its predecessor?

[Charikov] The policies of its predecessor's final years.

[Kobysh] Yes, because the present outgoing administration...[changes thought] You and I were together, I think, or at any rate I was with PRAVDA correspondents at the Republican Party convention in Detroit and heard Reagan there. The way things began it was becoming a bit frightening. How was mankind going to live with a U.S. President like that?

[Vasilyev] And then there was the Moscow visit, and I was in the Kremlin when the journalists began asking Reagan whether he still thinks that the Soviet Union is an evil empire. His answer was: No, no, I don't think that any longer. So there really was a very serious transformation in the views of that administration, and as you correctly pointed out the question is which legacy of the previous administration will be taken up by the new one—the first part or the second?

[Kobysh] So that there is no onesidedness, as it were, in our discussion of these matters, including the transformations that occurred with Reagan, I want to say that I had the honor of talking in the last couple of months with Commander in Chief, President, First Secretary Comrade Fidel Castro and Brazilian President Jose Sarney. Reflecting the point of view of the vast majority of the Third World—and it makes up three-quarters of mankind—they said Reagan has indeed changed toward you, with your strength and might and the power of nuclear weapons, but U.S. policy has not only not changed, not softened toward us, the Third World, but has become tougher and even brutal. Therefore, the question arises here of the difficult legacy that is being passed on to Bush. I think that on certain issues relating to talks with the Soviet Union he is predestined to consistency, continuity, and to continuing these talks.

[Charikov] You mean that continuity is already laid down in some way, in what Reagan has bequeathed to him, so to speak.

[Kobysh] I cannot see a way in which he could move away from this position without losing his reputation both in the United States, among his allies, and throughout the world. Furthermore, this concerns not only nuclear weapons. Very serious talks lie ahead relating to chemical weapons, where the U.S. stance is not constructive at present. Extremely important talks on conventional arms lie ahead and of course it is very interesting and important to know how the new U.S. Administration will behave.

[Vasilyev] And there are really a lot of questions here, because continuity is continuity. But every new administration, if one uses U.S. terminology, is like a new football team, or some kind of new orchestra, which starts to play in its own style. You know, in this sense I think that in the past we approached this in an oversimplified manner believing, how can I put it, that there were all these people from the same monopolies pulling the politicians' strings. In fact, real people come to power with their own views, their contacts, their likes and dislikes. Therefore, a lot depends on the specific people that are now actively starting to move into the governmental offices in Washington. What do you think, Vitaliy Ivanovich?

[Kobysh] First, I think that if one talks about the American people who hold the office of President it is very difficult to make predictions. I recall, Gennadiy Vladimirovich, how you and I livened up—let's put it like that—when the representative of the Democratic Party, Jimmy Carter, took office.

[Vasilyev] A peanut farmer....

[Kobysh, interrupting] ...a peanut farmer, a Democrat, a liberal....

[Vasilyev, interrupting] ...a man of the people....

[Kobysh, interrupting] ...a man of the people. Americans called him a pious saint. But this pious saint got up to such things, brought in such military programs, and drove the international situation to such tension in a way that unbridled conservatives in the post of President had not dared to do. Therefore, any kind of predictions will be very relative here. Second, you said that a primitive idea has come about that the monopolies, the corporations I would say, pull the strings and the President moves his right or left hand or leg correspondingly. Of course, this is not quite the case, but nonetheless they do tug and Presidents are forced to react to this.

I recall, in connection with this, what was said by our first ambassador to the United States, the late Comrade Troyanovskiy, the father of our present ambassador to China, also Troyanovskiy, about what it was like when Roosevelt was in power. He was giving us a lecture and we asked him: Alright then, what about when President Roosevelt was in power? After all, American capitalism still remains, yet Roosevelt was a strong, independent personality. So what has changed?

He replied: I will give you a very brief reply, the same reply that Roosevelt himself gave me. I asked him the very same question. He said: Well, there have been changes, very many changes. What exactly? I did not get a clear reply from him, and asked Ford, owner of one of the biggest U.S. corporations. Mr President of the corporation, what has changed for you since Roosevelt came to power? He said a great deal has changed. What exactly has changed? Well, before they phoned me and asked me what to do, and now I have to phone them and advise them on what to do.

[Vasilyev] I don't agree with you completely either in your assessment of Carter or on this issue. You see, in my view Carter is more complicated, so to speak. He is not simply a man who stirred up the arms race. He came with good intentions. In his inaugural speech he stated that he would reduce arms by 5-7 percent, but right-wing forces brought their weight to bear on him. He proved not to have either the necessary base, or maybe some sort of inner firmness to withstand this. In this sense the Carter Presidency was a difficult period. Maybe in the final analysis we were also to blame to some extent, because inherent in our policies at that time were a certain inflexibility and lack of initiative. I simply remember the arrival in Moscow of U.S. Secretary of State Vance with disarmament proposals which we immediately brushed aside. Maybe we should have sat down at the negotiating table and started discussing them.

As for Roosevelt it seems to me that, you know, he carried out capitalist restructuring of his country to a certain extent, you see. He introduced some elements of state regulation, social programs. In effect maybe—and many Americans think this—maybe he saved U.S. capitalism.

[Kobysh] That is most likely the case. There is no dispute between us because I am prepared to subscribe to every word you have said, both about Roosevelt...[changes thought] confounded questions haunt all the few liberal U.S. Presidents that there have been. You remember what happened during the Kennedy Presidency, when the world actually twice came to the brink of a nuclear world war....

[Charikov, interrupting] ...a catastrophe.

[Kobysh] A catastrophe. This occurred under the intelligent, liberal President Kennedy who was well liked by us, and with whom in the last year, the last period of his stay in power, we started to set up a dialogue. He was killed. Maybe precisely because of this....

[Vasilyev, interrupting] It is possible that in effect he approached the idea of peaceful coexistence and even cooperation between the two states. I mean his speech at a U.S. university. I read it again recently. You know today it almost sounds like a political testament. If all U.S. officials were to behave today in the way described by Kennedy in this speech, made in fact not long before his death, we would have very constructive, very good relations. He really did undergo a rapid transformation and he grew in stature fast. The bullet in Dallas, the shots....

[Charikov, interrupting] You know, strangely enough, this same article that I have already mentioned in U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT somehow compares Bush with Kennedy, for reasons that I cannot comprehend.

[Kobysh] I think that it is the authors that are passing off what they would like to see for reality. There are many similarities. They represent New England, they represent the most educated northeast states, both are U.S. aristocrats and cultured people, highly educated with huge experience.

[Vasilyev] Incidentally, they both have very strong and firm ties with the business world.

[Kobysh] But a difficult legacy is being passed down to him, just as a very difficult legacy from the past stagnation period was passed down to our leadership. You said that we did not behave in the best way ourselves, and recalled 1979; linked with this are the very great difficulties that we have to work through. Of course, we are all thinking primarily about Afghanistan now.

[Charikov] After all, in accordance with the Geneva agreements, 15 February is the final date for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops.

[Kobysh] But I do not yet see readiness on the part of the other side to observe the agreement which was signed in Geneva.

[Charikov] Which side do you mean, Vitaliy Ivanovich, the Pakistani or the U.S. side? Because....

[Kobysh, interrupting] I will explain; I will explain. Now most talk is of Pakistan and the armed resistance forces on the side of the Afghan opposition—that is to say, of the mujahidin and the Basmachi, yesterday's irreconcilables.

[Vasilyev] The irreconcilables, as they are called, in the opposition.

[Kobysh] The armed opposition. I am deeply convinced that if in Washington they do not just wave their hands, but take some constructive, real, and perhaps, tough measures, Pakistan will become different there and then. The mujahidin would then act differently, because Kabul is being bombarded by U.S. homing missiles, Stingers. They are U.S.-made. It is, for all intents and purposes, the United States which is making war on the Afghan people and, indirectly, on us. We made an agreement on ending that war and we are fully and very precisely observing the agreements reached in Geneva. The United States is not doing the same.

[Vasilyev] Vitaliy Ivanovich, you have spoken precisely about our conduct. You know, after Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev's UN speech—I was there, sitting in the press gallery, which is also well-known to you from previous years—well, naturally, I hurried into the hall to talk to the delegates. To a certain extent, I was lucky. I met Diego Cordovez, Ecuador's foreign minister, who played a very important part in the Afghanistan settlement. He had, altogether, a very high opinion of our leader's speech, including the fact—which interested me especially—that he spoke not only of our specific unilateral arms-cutting measures, but also of the first conceptual part of the speech—in particular, of our proposal to put a moratorium on the debts of developing countries. I began the whole conversation because he was the secretary general's representative in Geneva and, in general, participated actively in the settlement on Afghanistan. I asked how he viewed the state of affairs. He said: I will tell you this and I say to everybody that the Soviet Union is fulfilling its obligations irreproachably. He did not say anything more, but it seemed to me, so to speak, that there was also something underlying that short statement. He is in a difficult position, and it is, evidently, not easy for him to criticize the Americans, but there was this thought: that one country is perfectly irreproachably fulfilling its obligations.

[Charikov] Well, I think that one could supplement Cordovez with a statement from the magazine NEWSWEEK, where it is said perfectly clearly and unambiguously that the U.S. side, strictly speaking, does not intend, as it says there, to help the Soviet Union to get out of its problems—in particular, the Afghan problem. That means not only not helping the Soviet Union to get out....

[Vasilyev, interrupting] But hindering....

[Charikov, interrupting] ...but hindering, of course, hindering a settlement of the whole problem. And when you, Vitaliy Ivanovich, spoke about—more precisely, quoted—the statement by Comrade Castro, a very wise and timely one in my view, it seemed to me, all the same, that the level and, let us say, the character and the degree, of closeness in Soviet-U.S. relations has an influence, one way or another, on other processes in the world as well and, in particular, on regional conflicts. After all, you must agree that the settlement on Afghanistan would have been impossible without the four meetings which took place between our leaders. In fact, the first steps for a settlement in Africa would have been impossible, and the present direct talks between Washington and the Palestinians also.

[Vasilyev] The approaches to a solution of the Cambodian problem would have been impossible too.

[Charikov] Perfectly correct, Gennadiy Vladimirovich.

[Kobysh] The first contacts between the DPRK and South Korea.

[Charikov] Perfectly correct.

[Vasilyev] That probably leads to a very important thesis for us, which ought definitely to be present in our discussion. It is that the climate of international relations has changed very sharply now. I think that the clearest manifestation of this, however regrettable it may be, is connected with our tragedy in Armenia. Remember Chernobyl: The reaction was different. I was in the United States at that time, and I remember that there was caution, there was fear, and very few people showed a desire to help us quickly.

[Charikov] There was open, malicious delight.

[Vasilyev, interrupting] Malicious delight. Only Doctor Gale and Armand Hammer, look....

[Charikov, interrupting] There were only a few.

[Vasilyev] I think that it would have been impossible to expect that without our restructuring, without the new face of the Soviet Union which has now appeared before the world.

[Kobysh] True, but since I was also in Chernobyl, virtually the day after the tragedy, I cannot look at what is happening through rose-colored glasses, since the wounds of Chernobyl had not yet healed when the Armenian disaster came along, and we value very much the help which we are now being given. But, at the same time, we must look at who is giving us this help and in what connection. It is people helping. Regarding regional conflicts, just look at what denouements or semi-denouements have begun following the successful accord on Afghanistan. Regarding Angola, Cuba, and the RSA, that is an absolutely hopeless situation for the RSA and, therefore, for the West and the United States. They were looking for just some kind of way out of it, because it can end in only one thing: an explosion, a war, in which he who came there to obtain gold will not win, but the people will win. The Near East: That is a tragic situation for the U.S. people—I am not talking now of the blood of the peoples of the Near East themselves, first and foremost the Palestinians. They were drawn into a war, a conflict, which in general, has no direct connection with America. We are doing everything to help them get out of there. Korea: The Americans are very much afraid for the fate of their positions and the positions of South Korea. That is to say, they enter into and agree to talks and accords where it is advantageous to them.

[Vasilyev] But advantageous to us as well, I think.

[Kobysh] That is another question. Look at how they are now acting according to priorities. They are pedalling where it is advantageous to them and impeding in every manner a final solution of the Afghan problem, because somebody, some very black, dark forces in the United States want our soldiers to get killed and the Afghans to kill each other permanently. I apologize again for having to say this at the new year, when we are all wishing each other happiness and joy, but there will be no happiness and joy without the truth.

[Vasilyev] In my opinion, we have approached here this often discussed question of ours, the necessity of the new political thinking. If we think, as before, according to the principle that what is good for me is bad for my opponent or neighbor or that what is good for my neighbor is bad for me, then we will not solve our problems, the problems of our world on the eve of the third millennium.

[Charikov] The fact that this same new thinking you have just now mentioned, Gennadiy Vladimirovich, is winning a larger and larger number of supporters, inspires in us in the year that has just begun, a certain amount of optimism. Our program, esteemed comrades, has come to an end. Permit me once more, on behalf of the participants and on behalf of All-Union Radio, to congratulate you on this new year. All the best.

Security Council Denounces Pan Am Plane Downing

LD3012211888 Moscow TASS in English 2104 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] New York December 30 TASS—The U.N. Security Council has firmly denounced the destruction of a Pan American airliner on December 21, which led to a loss of hundreds of human lives.

The Security Council has called upon all the states to give assistance in arresting those responsible for the tragedy for them to face trial.

Illicit acts directed against civil aviation safety imperil the safety of persons and property, and seriously disrupt air communication and undermine confidence in civil aviation safety, the Security Council said in its statement passed today. The Security Council called upon the International Civil Aviation Organisation to continue efforts to promote civil aviation safety, including universal adoption of civil aviation safety conventions and strict compliance with them.

United States & Canada

Gorbachev Sends New Year's Message to Americans
LD0101080689 Moscow TASS in English 0755 GMT 1 Jan 89

["Mikhail Gorbachev's New Year Message to Americans"—TASS headline]

[Text] Moscow January 1 TASS—The following is the text of Mikhail Gorbachev's New Year's message to the American people.

Dear Americans,

On this first day of the New Year I am pleased to have the opportunity to convey, on behalf of the Soviet people and on my own behalf, our best wishes to the American people, and to every American family.

Seeing out a year gone by and ushering in a New Year is always a moving experience. Each time we take stock of the past year—happy about some things, sad about others, and hoping that many of our concerns will be left behind as we cross the threshold of the year and that our wishes will be fulfilled in the coming year.

Last year was rich in momentous events. It also brought many good changes in relations between our peoples and countries. Today they are more dynamic and more humane. We have become closer, and we have come to know each other better.

Americans seem to be re-discovering the Soviet Union—and we are re-discovering America. Fears and suspicion are gradually giving way to trust and feelings of mutual liking.

I could see all of this for myself in my meetings with Americans in Washington and quite recently in New York. We regard the warmth and goodwill shown to the Soviet delegation during those days as something very important for our relations.

I think President Reagan, too, will remember his meetings with Soviet people during his visit to the Soviet Union.

We in the Soviet Union are in favour of the most wide-ranging ties between our peoples. I hope you are, too. And that means we can look ahead with optimism to the future of our relations. This is what we talked about with President-elect Bush.

1988 is memorable for all of us as a year when we began reducing the most terrifying weapons—nuclear weapons. That alone is enough for it to go down in history as a landmark, a great turning point in world affairs.

Any other facts, too, prove that changes for the better, very important for all of us, are taking place in the world. The Afghan issue is close to a settlement. Hostilities have ceased between Iran and Iraq. Real opportunities are emerging for resolving painful and complex issues in South East Asia and Southern Africa. The situation in the Middle East is also changing. All this is very encouraging.

And let me mention one thing in particular.

You know how much misfortune and suffering was caused by the earthquake in Armenia, how great was the human tragedy it wrought.

I went to see the ruins of the devastated Armenian towns. You can't even look at what the forces of nature have done without shuddering.

All Soviet people took the misfortune of the people of Armenia as their own. In this hour of grief they extended a helping hand to them, as brothers. The devastated towns and villages will be reborn—that is the will of all the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Armenia's tragedy has evoked great sympathy throughout the world. We are grateful to the American people and to all peoples who have come to our aid.

Seeing all this, one cannot help thinking that all people who live on this earth, all of us—however different—are really one family.

I am sure we will find enough wisdom and goodwill to establish together a true period of peace for all humankind.

If we are capable of a new way of feeling then we must surely be capable of a new way of thinking.

If we are capable of a new way of thinking then, instead of merely surviving, we can live in a new way—on the basis of equal rights, justice, trust, humanism and wide-ranging cooperation.

This is the message I wanted to convey in addressing the United Nations in New York.

There are, of course, still many problems in the world, and they are intricate and complex. But that only heightens the need to solve them together—as we say in our country, with everyone pitching in. It is good that we understand this and, moreover, that we are taking the first steps in that direction.

Both our countries have a lot of problems. Quite naturally, you know your problems better, and we know ours. We intend to solve our problems in the course of perestroyka.

But the Soviet Union and the United States also have some common problems. I am convinced that today, on the basis of growing mutual understanding and trust, we can solve them better than we could yesterday.

Once again I salute you, citizens of a great nation, once again I wish all of you peace, good health and well-being.

Ay there be more happiness and joy in your life, may your best hopes be fulfilled.

May our common achievements shine brighter and brighter, filling every Soviet and American home and all our planet with an abiding will for peace, development and construction.

A happy new year!

Reagan Sends New Year's Greetings to USSR

PM0201140989 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 2 Jan 89 Second Edition pp 1, 5

[Unattributed report: "President R. Reagan's New Year Message to the USSR"]

[Text] On behalf of the U.S. people I greet you on the occasion of the New Year.

In your country and mine the beginning of a new year is a time of hope and renewal. These spiritual gifts have never been as essential as they are now, when Soviet Armenia is beginning to heal its wounds. We express to you our profoundest sympathy. We pray for you. My wife, Nancy, and I myself hope that the efforts you will be exerting to make good the destruction will bring you comfort.

I believe that the relations between our two countries will continue to follow that same positive course they have adhered to throughout the year now ending. Despite our differences of view, we have been able to find some common ground. When I visited Moscow and met with President Gorbachev we were able to broaden our mutual understanding on vitally important issues concerning human rights, arms reductions, regional problems, and bilateral relations. Despite the fact that much remains to be done, we are making progress in all these areas. In Moscow we signed the ratification documents for the treaty eliminating a whole class of U.S. and Soviet medium-range missiles, and the implementation of this historic treaty is proceeding smoothly. Soviet and U.S. representatives are continuing to discuss a 50-percent reduction in strategic nuclear armaments. And we are ready to embark on new talks on conventional armed forces in Europe. In his recent statement at the United Nations President Gorbachev announced substantial reductions in Soviet conventional armed forces. This is, of course, a step in the right direction with a view to eliminating the imbalance in the correlation of military forces in Europe, but much more remains to be done. Thus, although a great deal has been achieved in the sphere of arms reduction and arms control, we must continue our efforts aimed at ensuring a durable peace.

In the human rights sphere progress is being made in respect of the reunification of families, granting people greater freedom to travel, and in other areas. The end to jamming is also a positive step, because if we wish to understand each other better then we must be in a position to speak freely with one another and also to listen to each other freely.

In the sphere of bilateral relations—the field of cultural and educational exchanges, for example—the change for the better is manifesting itself in the gradual lowering of the artifically created barriers dividing our peoples.

And as for regional problems, from Afghanistan to the Persian Gulf people are finding ways of settling conflicts which have been continuing for many years. Maybe your country will join ours in an attempt to bring peace, democracy, and security to Central America.

In all these areas the changes for the better which have already taken place are only the beginning of a long and difficult path to greater mutual understanding and cooperation. We are ready to move farther down this path. Important differences exist between our countries—and they will exist for many more years yet. But I can state with confidence that in the year 1988 we have been witnesses of a progress which, if we display circumspection and diligence, will also continue next year and in subsequent years.

President Gorbachev's visit to New York, cut short by the terrible disaster which befell Armenia, gave us the opportunity to meet one more time during my Presidency. On 20 January George Bush will take the oath as my successor. The U.S. people elected him partly because his election signifies consistency in the policies—both foreign and domestic—which the United States has been pursuing these last 8 years. I know that George Bush will pursue that same course with the same commitment.

This is my last message to you as President. So, allow me to end with the following words: I believe that the world is now a safer place than it was a year ago, and I pray to God that in a year's time it will be even safer. I wish you, Soviet people, all the best in the new year.

Thank you, and may God bless you and keep you all the days of your life.

Reagan Notes Soviet Ties in New Year's Message

LD0101105489 Moscow TASS in English 1034 GMT 1 Jan 89

[Text] Washington January 1 TASS—President Ronald Reagan congratulated the Americans on the New Year. "I believe it's going to be a very good year indeed if we continue the progress we made this year," the U.S. President said in his regular Saturday radio address to the nation.

Having stressed that 1989 holds out promise for a further improvement of Soviet-American relations and for a relaxation of international tensions, Ronald Reagan expressed the view that the United States should, therefore, continue its "policy of peace through strength, which is paying off in spades."

"We can continue to improve relations with the Soviet Union in 1989," the President said, "if we remember that the key to improved relations thus far has been our strength and resolution. We must remain sober in our estimation of our negotiating partners and without illusion. We know about their goals and aims. Whether we're talking about bilateral relations with the Soviet Union or efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement in the Middle East, the lesson is the same. To achieve further reductions in international tensions, the incoming administration will need appropriate levels of defense spending—not to mention support from Congress for their foreign policy initiatives."

Ronald Reagan expressed the conviction that the USSR would withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by the agreed date, which, as he put it, will be a great day for world peace.

Touching on the bombing of the American "Boeing-747" liner over Scotland, Ronald Reagan said that he and President-elect George Bush were determined to "seek out the truth and punish the guilty."

New Year's Greeting Card Received From U.S.

LD0101142889 Moscow TASS in English 1344 GMT 1 Jan 89

[Text] Moscow January 1 TASS—TASS correspondent Ruben Shirinyan reports: A New Year greeting card to the Soviet people arrived in Moscow from the United States on Sunday morning. It should definitely be registered in the Guiness Book of Records for its enormous size—15 metres long and four metres wide. The greeting card has 20,000 signatures, including those of Michael Dukakis, Jesse Jackson, the governors of 13 American states, as well as congressmen, public figures, clergymen, cultural workers and businessmen.

The card is covered with drawings, photos and inscriptions one of which is addressed to Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev. "Dear Mr Gorbachev, we, the American citizens, express our enormous gratitude to you and all Soviet people for your courage and commitment to the cause of peace, and wish you a Happy New Year," the inscription says.

The idea of this original New Year greeting belongs to a businessman from the city of Fairfield, Iowa. The paper for the card was provided free of charge by the American company "Superior Specialities" in Wisconsin. The Russian text was first typed on a VDU and then imaged on the greeting card.

After signatures were collected in Washington, the card was delivered to Philadelphia and then to New York from where it was taken to Moscow by "Boeing-747". The flight's commander Dale Folkman said that the greeting card reflected the attitude of Americans to the Soviet Union and the Soviet people and added that he was very pleased to deliver it to Moscow.

Charikov Reviews Soviet-American Ties in 1988

LD3112152988 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 0730 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Igor Charikov commentary]

[Excerpts] [Announcer] In this news edition we will try to sum up some of the results in Soviet-U.S. relations this year. Indeed, quite a few events have happened which have influenced those relations and have created the prerequisites for the further development of relations. Here is our international affairs commentator Igor Charikov. [passage omitted]

[Charikov] Highs and lows have been characteristic of the latest period, the 8 years that the Reagan administration has occupied the White House. There have been times when a cold hostility exuded from across the Atlantic and words like "evil empire" and so on were heard. But in the last year or two the atmosphere has begun to noticeably change, and we can now say with a large measure of confidence that Soviet-U.S. relations are looking up.

[Announcer] Those changes are noted in the press even in the United States itself. What led to this, in your view?

[Charikov] If one is to generalize, in brief, then it is the new political thinking, the new approaches to the solution of both bilateral and international problems. The new thinking has allowed longstanding stereotypes to be overcome.

[Announcer] I presume you mean on both sides.

[Charikov] Yes, naturally. But this applies more to the United States, since there, over decades, in the years of the cold war, an image of the Soviet Union as an enemy was formed, as a potential aggressor which aspires to conquer the entire world. Stereotypes are hard to overcome. We know this from our own experience. And it is more difficult in the United States, where every American, literally from when he is in diapers, imbibes a morality of exclusivity. Major political campaigns are as a rule accompanied by chauvinist upsurges.

[Announcer] As, for instance, the presidential elections.

[Charikov] That is the classic example. In the year of presidential elections, everybody who aspires to occupy that post becomes considerably more conservative than he really is, speaks much of his resolve to make America strong, and—since the word is strong—this means the strongest in the world. This is to impress the electorate. But even this year, a year when calls for U.S. military superiority sounded louder than calls for reason and dialogue, even this year there were the advances we noted at the outset. You know, for the people of the United States, the concept of nuclear armaments, that is missiles, as the delivery vehicle for nuclear warheads, is highly abstract. Nonetheless, when the INF Treaty was signed and 6 months later entered into force, transformations were outlined in the minds of Americans.

[Announcer] Was that not a slip of the tongue? Were they outlined? Have they not happened?

[Charikov] You know, I am far from harboring any illusions of there having been such fast and cardinal transformations in the mentality of people who for decades were told one thing and have to take something else as the truth in the space of a single year. I say "outlined" with a large measure of optimism, since I am quite sure that the new political thinking—no matter how they try to distort it or hide from it—is finding more and more advocates among Americans.

Soviets Report Tense U.S. Relations With Libya

Naval Contingent Leaves for Area

LD3112114888 Moscow TASS in English 1117 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] Washington December 31 TASS—A combatant group consisting of 13 U.S. Navy ships with 12,000 seamen on board left the port of Norfolk on Friday heading for the Mediterranean where the U.S. Sixth Fleet is based.

Mel Sandin, a Pentagon spokesman, has said this was a preplanned transfer of troops intended for stationing aboard a new nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, Theodore D. Roosevelt.

The spokesman specified that the dispatch of the military contingent to the Mediterranean was not connected with the circumstances of the investigation of the causes of the crash of the U.S. Boeing-747 airliner which, experts believe, was blown up by a bomb planted by terrorists.

He said that neither was the transfer connected with the U.S. Administration's accusations against Libya that the latter intended to produce chemical weapons at one of its plants.

U.S. threats in this connection gave rise to a wave of indignation in the Arab world. Libya categorically rejected the U.S. accusations, and suggested an international inspection of the above-mentioned pharmaceutical plant.

Plant Inspection Offer Rejected

LD3112121388 Moscow TASS in English 1038 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] Washington December 31 TASS—The United States rejected on Friday a Libyan offer to allow an international inspection of the pharmaceutical plant which is located 80 km away from Tripoli.

The offer was made last week with a view to disproving the accusations brought in by the U.S. Administration that the plant is ostensibly intended for the production of chemical weapons.

Phyllis Oakley, official spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of State, said at a regular briefing that "a one-time inspection could not be conclusive in this regard. A chemical warfare plant could easily be modified to appear as a legitimate industrial chemical plant such as a pharmaceutical or fertiliser facility."

Proceeding from that, Oakley drew a conclusion that a Libya-managed tour would not alleviate concerns about the true nature of the plant.

At the same time the spokeswoman declined to answer the question as to what, in U.S. opinion, Libya should do to prove that chemical weapons are not actually produced in that country.

U.S. 'Whipping Up' Tension

LD0101164689 Moscow TASS in English 1633 GMT 1 Jan 89

["U.S. Whipping Up Tension in Relations With Libya"—TASS headline]

[Text] Washington, Janurary 1 TASS—The United States has dispatched to the Mediterranean a large naval squadron. A spokesman for the U.S. Navy said on Saturday that the aircraft carrier group of 13 ships, including the Theodore Roosevelt, the most up-to-date nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, left Norfolk, Virginia, carrying over 12,000 servicemen on board.

Washington admitted that a task force like that had been sent to the Mediterranean region for the first time since the Theodore Roosevelt had been launched in October 1984. Early in 1986 the U.S. imposed tough sanctions on Libya and soon after that staged a gangster armed attack on that country. The bombing of Libyan territory resulted in the loss of life among the civilian population, including women and children. Several days ago Washington prolonged the anti-Libyan sanctions for another six months.

Paris January 1 TASS—Commenting on the sending of the U.S. naval squadron to the Mediterranean, a correspondent of the French television company TF-1 pointed out that, according to informed sources, the U.S. intended to deal a blow at Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, its traditional rival, before term of office of the incumbent Administration comes to a close. A White House spokesman had stated before that President Reagan did not rule out a possibility of the U.S. using military force against the Libyan plant where, according the U.S. Administration, the production of chemical weapons was about to be started.

New York January 1 TASS—According to the U.S. State department, the United States has rejected Libya's proposal to inspect the plant, THE NEW YORK TIMES reports. At the same time, the newspaper pointed out that specialists on this problem in the Administration believed that an inspection procedure could well be worked out that would remove U.S. concern.

Commentary on U.S. 'Threats'

LD0201150889 Moscow World Service in English 1210 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Aleksandr Pogodin commentary]

[Text] Tension is reported to be mounting in the Mediterranean, where a large group of U.S. naval vessels, led by the newest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier "Theodore Roosevelt," is on its way. However, the American military authorities allege this task force's mission is most usual, routine by nature, and unrelated to the political situation. Aleksandr Pogodin comments, and this is what he writes.

Washington has resumed threats against Libya and possible strikes on its territory. Such coincidence and the massing of naval strength in the Mediterranean with political pressure is hardly accidental. If you recall, in 1986 events developed much the same. Washington addressed a series of political charges against Libya. A U.S. naval unit was off that country's shores to demonstrate force. Then came the savage shelling of some Libyan cities, and heavy casualties as a result.

So far the only difference has been in motive. In 1986 the United States claimed that the strikes were delivered on terrorist bases. However, the casualties included only civilians, among them foreigners, as the area of foreign embassies in Tripoli came under attack. And now the U.S. authorities declare they intend to attack a facility where chemical agents are allegedly produced. The Libyan authorities have categorically rejected the assertions on the ground that this enterprise produces exclusively medicine. More than that, Libya has suggested sending international inspectors to the plant to study the real situation and remove all possible charges. Perhaps that's what's unsuitable for the U.S. authorities. Anyway, a spokesman for the State Department has turned down a Libyan proposal on inspection.

Developments in the Mediterranean can lead to a rather menacing situation, and let's hope that political realism will prevail over the inertia of global imperialism in the long run.

CBS Reporter on Attack Plan

LD0301083889 Moscow TASS in English 0817 GMT 3 Jan 89

[Text] Washington January 3 TASS—The United States is planning to attack a Libyan pharmaceutical plant 50 miles from the Libyan capital of Tripoli. According to the American telecompany CBS, the Pentagon is already calculating the direction and the force of wind to prevent the spread of gases to populated areas.

For the past several weeks, the U.S. Administration has been whipping up a new anti-Libyan campaign, accusing Libya of an intention to manufacture chemical weapons at this plant still under construction.

Libya has repeatedly said that the plant is for pharmaceutical production and have suggested international inspection which has been rejected by the United States.

Asked by a CBS reporter about possible timing of an attack, the company's Pentagon correspondent David Martin said the strike might be carried out between the end of an international chemical weapons conference in Paris on January 11 and January 20 when the new American Administration will take office. It is also possible that the strike will take place in three months, after the plant goes into operation.

Martin said that the strike was most likely to come from a cruise missile launched from a submarine near the Libyan coast. He added that the use of a cruise missile would rule out the death of the pilots and help avoid the need to ask other countries for permission to fly through their air space.

U.S. Meeting With PLO in Tunisia Reported

LD0301113689 Moscow TASS in English 1126 GMT 3 Jan 89

[Text] Washington January 3 TASS—White House Spokesman Roman Popadiuk told journalists in Los Angeles about the recent unofficial meeting in Tunisia between American Ambassador Robert H. Pelletrau and PLO representative Hakam Bal'awi.

The meeting was focused on the Middle East. According to Popadiuk, the United States is not planning any further meetings with the PLO so far to continue the dialogue.

The American ambassador told the PLO representative that the United States would welcome any PLO information on the explosion of an American passenger plane on December 21 last year.

Bassam Abu Sharif, a spokesman for the PLO leader, said in an interview with the American TV news network CNN that the PLO was ready to help investigate the plane crash. He emphasised that Yasir 'Arafat opposed to all forms of terrorism.

President Reagan, who is now on vacation in California, said that no information concerning the crash had yet been received from the PLO.

Northeast Asia

Japan's Takeshita Hopes for 1989 Gorbachev Visit
LD0101121389 Moscow TASS in English 1157 GMT 1 Jan 89

[Text] Tokyo January 1 TASS—By TASS correspondent Nikolay Geronin:

"Japan is stepping up her diplomatic activity in the Asian-Pacific region, retaining close contacts with the United States in the sphere of foreign policy," the Japanese prime minister Noboru **Takeshita** said at a traditional New Year press-conference here.

Turning to Japan's relations with the Soviet Union, the head of the Japanese Government expressed satisfaction with the results of the Soviet-Japanese consultations at ministerial level, held in Tokyo last December, primarily with the achieved agreement to prepare the ground for Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Japan.

Since the atmosphere is favourable now, Takeshita said, "I wholeheartedly wish Gorbachev's visit to take place this year."

According to the Japanese prime-minister, his visit to the Soviet Union will be put on the order of the day after the Soviet leader's visit to Japan.

Speaking of Japanese-American relations, the prime-minister pointed out that he wished to go to the United States for an early meeting with the new U.S. president George Bush. However, it will be difficult to arrange a trip to the United States this January due to crammed schedules on both sides, Noboru Takeshita noted.

Japanese Foreign Minister Comments on Dialogue
LD0301073389 Moscow TASS in English 0728 GMT 3 Jan 89

[Text] Tokyo January 3 TASS—Continuation of the Soviet-Japanese dialogue will further understanding between the two countries, said Japanese Foreign Minister Sosuke Uno.

He noted in an interview with several Japanese newspapers published on Tuesday that there had been a frank exchange of opinions on all aspects of bilateral relations during the recent visit to Tokyo by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

Sosuke Uno expressed the hope that his new meetings with the Soviet minister in Paris at an international conference on banning chemcial weapons and then in Moscow would be important landmarks and would pave the way for a Soviet-Japanese summit.

Japan praises the fact, the minister noted, that the Japanese visit is on the agenda of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Commentary Assesses Shevardnadze's Asian Tour
OW3112103188 Moscow in Japanese to Japan 1000 GMT 27 Dec 88

[(Khamalin) commentary]

[Text] Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze wound up his visit to Japan, the Philippines, and the DPRK a few days ago. Regarding this, Moscow Radio commentator (Khamalin) writes as follows:

His visit to these countries was aimed at expressing Soviet views on our modern society after General Secretary Gorbachev made a new peace proposal in his address to the United Nations. He made the first visit as a Soviet foreign minister to the Asian and Pacific region after General Secretary Gorbachev's speech in Krasnoyarsk. In his Krasnoyarsk speech, General Secretary Gorbachev announced a new and fundamental Soviet diplomatic line. For this reason, negotiations and dialogue in Tokyo, Manila, and Pyongyang concentrated on international issues, at both a global and a regional level.

There has been unrest in Asia and the Pacific and the Soviet Union has grounds to believe this. This unrest is related with the emergence of a positive trend in Asia, and the Pacific region has conspicuously lagged behind other regions in the world, particularly Europe. Needless to say, there have been positive changes in the Asian and Pacific region. For example, prospects for the resolution of the Cambodian issue and the easing of tensions in the Korean peninsula have emerged. The normalization of relations between the Soviet Union and China has been promoted.

However, no progress has been seen on such important issues as disarmament and the lowering of military confrontational levels in the Asian and Pacific region. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze exchanged candid views on this with officials of the countries which he visited. What I want to stress in this connection is that the Soviet Union has taken unilateral measures. The abolition of the INF—Intermediate-range Nuclear Force—deployed by the Soviet Union in Asia is included in a Soviet-U.S. treaty. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Mongolia has started in accordance with an agreement between the Soviet and Mongolian Governments. In his address to the United Nations, General Secretary Gorbachev said that this process would continue. A unilateral decision by the Soviet Union to cut troop strength by 500,000, which was announced at the United Nations, is related to the Asian region. However, efforts to lower the military confrontational level must be reciprocal. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze called on the countries he visited to pay attention to the Soviet plan for strengthening peace in the Asian and Pacific region.

Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze said that the Soviet proposals were not a perfect prescription and did not insist on trust in them. He went on to say that the proposals were Soviet views on measures to ensure security in the Asian and Pacific region and were invitations to the countries concerned to make a joint quest for measures to ensure security on the basis of mutual understanding.

The Soviet position was fully supported by the DPRK and understood in the Philippines. However, the Japanese leadership's approach to these proposals was extremely cautious. Is it not appropriate for us to expect corresponding proposals or initiatives from Japan, in view of its leading position? However, no such thing has happened. There has been a trend in Japan to diminish the significance of the Soviet proposals. Their excuse was that they should see how the Soviet Union would carry out its proposals. However, the United States and the West European countries, allies of Japan, have highly rated the Soviet proposals and conducted serious dialogue with the Soviet Union. The Japanese Government has continuously mentioned the Soviet military buildup in the Far East. However, the Soviet Union has actually reduced its military strength and activities. The Japanese leaders appear to view the new Soviet political thinking as an unilateral concession from the Soviet Union. They appear to see how far the Soviet Union will go, and to study this. We do not think this attitude is a constructive approach. Japan, which is striving to raise its international authority, should not remain as an onlooker at a time when the future of the Asian and Pacific region and the whole world is being discussed.

At a press conference before he left Tokyo, Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze said that mutual understanding had been reached to the extent that both countries could discuss a new page in Soviet-Japanese relations. We hope that these fresh efforts by the Soviet Union and Japan will turn Asia and the Pacific into a peaceful and secure region. A joint communique, an outcome of Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's visit to Japan, stated the need for these efforts.

Moscow Comments on Japan's Defense Capability

*OW3112050188 Moscow in Japanese to Japan
1000 GMT 30 Dec 88*

[Text] The following report is from the TASS correspondent in Tokyo:

According to Tokyo media reports, Japan's Defense Agency Director General Tazawa welcomes the Soviet peace proposal announced by General Secretary Gorbachev in his recent speech to the United Nations.

In an interview with THE JAPAN TIMES, however, Director General Tazawa asserted that there is no change in status of military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, in spite of the Soviet decision on unilateral reduction of 500,000 men from its force. Based on this viewpoint, Defense Chief Tazawa actually insisted that Japan's defense capability should be strengthened and the Self-Defense Forces should further be modernized. He said this while affirming that Japan should show its neighboring countries that Japan's defense capability poses no threat to them.

Defense Chief Tazawa also revealed that the Japanese Government is soon due to start reviewing a new defense buildup plan which, when finalized, will come into force, succeeding the current 1986-1990 plan which had brought the military expenditure of Japan up to 1,800 billion yen.

On the other hand, ASAHI SHIMBUN reports that the Defense Agency, in drawing up the new defense buildup plan, will make an assessment of expected effects of the announced military reductions on the Soviet strategy toward the Far East.

MAINICHI SHIMBUN, meanwhile, reports that the Foreign Ministry and the Defense Agency are of the view that there is no change in the trend of Soviet military buildup in the Far East. But the daily adds that the issue of reductions in nuclear as well as conventional arms is increasingly coming to the fore.

Japan has joined the group of the world's top three nations in the rank of military expenditures. If Japan is to maintain a 5 percent growth rate in defense budget, it will not help ease the tensions in the Asian and Pacific region.

MAINICHI SHIMBUN insists that Japan must strictly abide by the ceiling of 1 percent of the GNP for its military expenditures. Stressing that the military capability for Japan should be in the nature of defense, the paper points out that the defense power in the new buildup plan should be reduced in both quality and quantity. MAINICHI further notes that Japan should come up with its own proposal for military reductions in the Asian and Pacific region.

Foreign Affairs Observer Reviews Japan Ties

*OW0201050289 Moscow in Japanese to Japan
1000 GMT 29 Dec 88*

[Interview with Radio Moscow foreign affairs observer Tikhonov; place, date not given]

[Text] [Announcer] Hello, everyone. There are only 2 days left before the new year of 1989. The Year of the Dragon is handing over its baton to the Year of the Snake, and the year-end holidays have just started. Therefore, we think that it is good to review Soviet-Japanese relations in the past year. There is no telling what will develop, but we think that it is important for us to discuss this theme in any case. We have decided to interview Tikhonov, a Radio Moscow foreign affairs observer. Our announcer will read his remarks in his place.

[Question] Let me start with this question: Do you think that Soviet-Japanese relations have developed in a favorable or unfavorable way?

[Answer] I feel that our relations have developed in a favorable way. Our overall relations have developed positively, with the official dialogue between our two countries becoming more active and our relations expanding in some fields.

[Question] I am relieved to hear that, but are there any grounds for your remarks?

[Answer] Of course there are. This is exactly what I would like to speak about today. First, let me start with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's recent visit to Japan. He visited Japan after a break of 3 years. It is very significant that his visit resulted in an agreement on starting preparations for Soviet-Japanese summit talks and on establishing a working group to further promote the negotiations on the conclusion of a peace treaty. From a humanitarian viewpoint, the Soviet side has indicated its readiness to consider permitting visits to Japanese graves in a few more localities.

In addition, more fruitful results have been achieved. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze stated that the two sides attained mutual understanding in opening up a new chapter in bilateral relations. Japanese Foreign Minister Uno made similar remarks. Mr Uno, who has retained his post in the recent cabinet reshuffle, has stated his hopes for establishing new relations between the Japanese and Soviet governments, and indicated his wishes to make General Secretary Gorbachev's visit to Japan a reality.

Let me return to the topic of Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's visit to Japan. I feel that it is of great significance that the joint communique states that the two sides intend to improve Soviet-Japanese relations.

[Question] Incidentally, as reported in our commentary program yesterday, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's visit to Japan was the last event in this year's 10 top news of the world. However, speaking only of Soviet-Japanese relations, his visit should naturally be taken as the most important news. I think this is the reason why Mr Tikhonov has started with this topic. Aside from his visit held near the end of the year, I think there have been other important events that are noteworthy. What is your view?

[Answer] Several noted figures from the political circles in Japan visited the Soviet Union one after another this year. In May, a delegation of the Communist Party of Japan led by Tetsuo Fuwa, vice chairman of its Central Committee, and a delegation of the Japanese Socialist Party [JSP], headed by its chairperson Takako Doi, visited the Soviet Union. They held talks with General Secreatary Gorbachev.

In his talks with JSP Chairperson Doi, General Secretary Gorbachev stated that the development of Soviet relations with Japan is an issue related to our long-range policy for the future. He stressed two major points in the Soviet approach toward Japan: The Soviet Union is ready to improve its relations with Japan on the basis of post-war realities; and the Soviet Union does not intend to press Japan for its friendship.

[Question] Another noted Japanese politician has also visited the Soviet Union. If he had made his visit a year earlier, it would have caused a great sensation in the world.

[Answer] Perhaps you are referring to the visit by former Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone. Mr Nakasone held talks with General Secretary Gorbachev on various problems existing in Soviet-Japanese relations. During their talks, General Secretary Gorbachev stated his regrets over the stalemate in Soviet-Japanese relations despite the remarkable achievements made by the Soviet Union in promoting its relations with many countries during the past 3 years, since the start of its restructuring program. However, General Secretary Gorbachev and former Prime Minister Nakasone eventually agreed that Soviet-Japanese relations should be developed in the interests of the two countries.

[Question] I think the visit indicates that Mr Nakasone himself attaches great importance to the bilateral relations. What is your view? I also understand that he will make another visit to the Soviet Union in January. Is this true?

[Answer] Yes, it seems that he will. This will be his fifth visit, and he will visit the Soviet Union together with Giscard d'Estaing, the former French president, and Mr Kissinger, the former U.S. secretary of state. All these events are significant because they signify that both the Soviet Union and Japan have hopes for expanding the bilateral relations. These events are precisely the grounds for their sticking fast to each other.

By the way, an opinion poll conducted jointly by the TASS News Agency of the Soviet Union and KYODO NEWS SERVICE of Japan has aroused attention in the two countries. The results of the survey indicate that 84.2 percent of the Japanese and 98.9 percent of the Soviet people want improvement in the bilateral relations.

[Question] What will it bring for the peoples of the two countries?

[Answer] We can judge this only by taking a look at the Soviet-Japanese cooperation now under way in various fields. Let us take the cooperation being promoted in the cultural field as an example. In August, many Muscovites attended the tea ceremony sponsored by the Ura-Senke [a famous Japanese tea ceremony group]. Meanwhile, famous Soviet ballet groups, drama troupes, and musical groups were very successful in their performances in Japan. In addition, a 2-year cultural exchange program to start on 1 April next year has been worked out. [program is interrupted by music for about 2 minutes]

[Question] Now, let us continue our review of Soviet-Japanese relations in the past year. We have briefly touched on the cultural exchanges. While giving due appraisal to these exchanges, we must now turn to the fields related to material life. How have the relations in trade and economy developed?

[Answer] Due to the decline in past years, the increase in the volume of trade this year has been most remarkable. Perhaps the convocation of the 11th joint session of the Soviet-Japanese and Japanese-Soviet economic committees held in Tokyo earlier this year have given impetus, to some extent, to the trade. The first Soviet-Japanese joint venture was established this year. However, when compared with the efforts of other Western countries, not much progress has been made in this concern.

In this connection, the Soviet Government decided not long ago to take measures to encourage the establishment of joint ventures. In so doing, the Soviet Union expects that the Soviet Far East has various features for developing joint ventures.

Among large-scale transactions, we can point out a contract amounting to 5 billion dollars signed with Mitsubishi Co for building a [word indistinct] factory in West Siberia. However, overall Soviet-Japanese economic cooperation has lagged far behind its potential.

[Question] Perhaps it is the same with the cooperation in the fields of science and technology?

[Answer] Well, certain progress has been made in this aspect this year, but we cannot say that the progress is sufficient. The Soviet-Japanese governmental committee on scientific and technological cooperation held its session in December, and an agreement was reached on cooperation not only in agriculture, but also in nuclear fusion and radioactive medicine. An accord on cooperation in these fields was reached earlier in the year, as were accords on environmental protection and earthquake prediction. In connection with the great earthquake in Armenia, the cooperation in earthquake prediction is of special significance. However, if the two sides agree, the cooperation in science and technolgoy will not be limited to these fields but could be expanded more extensively.

[Question] So far we have talked about the events involving both the Soviet Union and Japan. However, I feel that Soviet leaders' remarks are also of great significance. What is your view? For example, General Secretary Gorbachev's speech in Krasnoyarsk this year was of great significance. I think it has aroused attention not only in Japan but also in the whole world. What do you think?

[Answer] This is true, indeed. In his speech, General Secretary Gorbachev touched particularly on Soviet-Japanese relations and maintained that rapid development based on balanced benefits should be achieved. It is a principle of Soviet foreign policy to maintain a balance of benefits in international relations. In addition, new proposals were also made in his Krasnoyarsk speech about strengthening security in the Asia-Pacific region. In this cennection, the Soviet Union and Japan should certainly cooperate with each other. The Krasnoyarsk proposals became topics for vivid discussions during the sixth Soviet-Japanese round table conference which was held in Moscow last October. This conference can be counted as a major event in the development of Soviet-Japanese relations this year.

[Question] At this point, how about talking about the diplomacy promoted among the people?

[Answer] The exchanges between Soviet and Japanese civic organizations have developed steadily in the past years. As far as the Soviet-Japanese round table conference is concerned, it was conducted in an open atmosphere that had not been experienced before. Among those who participated in the conference were parliamentarians, noted social activists, academicians, and journalists from the two countries. In addition, the Soviet-Japanese governors conference, which was held for the first time after a break of about 10 years, can be counted as one of the important events of this year.

[Question] In other words, this year was filled with many events of great interest that will contribute to the development of Soviet-Japanese relations. I hope that this level can be maintained next year so that it can serve as the basis for further development.

[Answer] At the same time, we strongly hope that the bilateral relations become truly good-neighborly and that they will comply with [words indistinct] and also with the interests of the peoples of our two nations.

Rogachev Meets Hokkaido Newspaper Delegation

OW0201234889 Moscow in Japanese to Japan 1200 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Rogachev met with a HOKKAIDO SHIMBUN delegation led by editorial board member Miyashita on 30 December. He had a friendly dialogue with them.

Near East & South Asia

Najibullah Announces 1 Jan Unilateral Cease-Fire

PM0301121989 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 3 Jan 89 Second Edition p 4

[TASS report: "Najibullah Statement"]

[Text] Kabul, 2 Jan—The Republic of Afghanistan advocates political methods to solve the Afghan problem and calls upon the opposite side to begin peace talks, but it is ready to deal an armed repulse to everyone who continues along the path of bloodshed and fratricide, Afghan President Najibullah stated Sunday [1 January]. Appealing to his compatriots on Afghan Television, Najibullah gave a detailed assessment of the current situation in the country.

The development of events in the period since the signing of the Geneva agreements has shown that the other side not only has not ceased but has considerably broadened its armed interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. It is violating its pledges at a time when Afghanistan and the USSR are observing them honestly and in detail. Implementing the terms of the Geneva accords, we have devoted and are devoting all our efforts to talks with and securing mutual understanding with the opposition both at home and abroad, the Afghan leader pointed out. In the course of the talks held between the Soviet Union and the representatives of the "seven-member alliance," Najibullah said, the USSR and Afghan joint stance on the problems of a settlement was expounded. These talks and the accord on continuing contacts are in themselves a considerable achievement. Considering it possible for individuals who played a notable role in the life of the country before to make a real contribution to restoring peace, the Republic of Afghanistan is endeavoring to create the appropriate conditions for this. It is on the basis of this assessment of the situation that we welcomed the talks between Yu.M. Vorontsov and the former king of Afghanistan in Rome. After all these talks, Yu.M. Vorontsov told the Afghan president about them in detail and both sides approved the incipient process. All these diplomatic actions are being implemented on the basis of accord between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. By playing an active role in the talks process the USSR is fulfilling its mission as guarantor of the Geneva agreements. The United States should also realize its responsibility as the other guarantor state.

Every day, Najibullah continued, Afghan blood continues to be shed. That is why the country's patriots must devote all their efforts to achieving peace and not miss a single opportunity for a cease-fire. Afghan Armed Forces units and subunits recently received the order to cease as of today all operations against the opposition. If our opponents refrain from hostilities, the temporary cease-fire will become a permanent one—a preparatory step for establishing peace. Otherwise all responsibility for continuing the bloodshed will rest with those who open fire.

Najibullah rejected the possibility of achieving peace within the country through the withdrawal of the incumbent leadership and the PDPA from the political arena. Anyone who puts forward such an idea is profoundly mistaken. It is indisputable that in that case war—between our current opponents—would continue for many more years to come before any representatives of the opposition could take power.

The implementation of the national reconciliation policy and the efforts to achieve a political settlement by no means signify the Armed Forces' refusal to defend the people's peaceful life or to maintain a constant state of combat readiness.

The president drew his compatriots' attention to the fruits of the opposition's temporary victories and their supremacy in Konar, Konduz, and Bamian. The so-called "jihad" is bringing the people only grief, suffering, death, and destruction. It was no accident that the inhabitants of Mehtarlam, who did not wish to undergo the tragedy of the population of the aforementioned cities and provinces, defended their city so heroically.

Najibullah went on to point out that, despite extremists' boastful statements following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from a number of areas of Afghanistan, they were simply unable to seize provinces "one after the other." Despite extensive interference from outside, the Afghan Armed Forces have during this period been able by and large to worthily defend the state power. It is with a sense of responsibility to the Afghan people and the international public, the president continued, that we are fulfilling our pledges regarding the withdrawal of the Soviet troop contingent from Afghanistan. The withdrawal of the remaining Soviet troops will also be implemented in accordance with these pledges.

In conclusion Najibullah expressed firm confidence in the final victory of the just cause of the peace-loving people of Afghanistan.

Foreign Ministry Statement

LD3112092688 Moscow TASS in English 0914 GMT 31 Dec 88

["Statement by USSR Foreign Ministry"—TASS headline]

[Text] Moscow December 31 TASS—The following statement issued by USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs was circulated here today:

"On December 30 President Najibullah of the Republic of Afghanistan announced that government troops had been instructed unilaterally to cease fire throughout the country's territory from January 1, 1989, and called on the armed opposition immediately to follow suit.

"The Soviet Union fully supports this peace move of the Afghan leadership and is stating, for its part, that all units of Soviet troops that still remain in Afghanistan will cease fire from the same date. Our decision will remain in effect throughout the period of an overall ceasefire.

"The above mentioned step by the Soviet and Afghan leadership opens up a unique opportunity to secure a decisive breakthrough in the cause of ensuring the most favourable atmosphere for achieving a just and comprehensive settlement of the Afghanistan situation. This move materialises the concrete initiatives proposed by Mikhail Gorbachev and Najibullah.

"The ceasefire is the paramount and indispensable condition which will also facilitate and expedite headway in all directions of a political settlement and national reconciliation, and will help, first of all, to establish a substantive inter-Afghan dialogue with a view to forming a government on a wide basis with the participation of all conflicting Afghan groups in it.

"Life has convincingly proved that it is impossible to resolve the Afghan problems arms in hand—the alignment of forces is such that a continuation of hostilities would lead only to dragging out the bloodshed, to an unjustified loss of life, and would add to the hardships and suffering of the entire Afghan people. It is precisely upon taking all this into consideration that both the Afghan opposition and those who support it should, at last, make their final choice.

"Hope is expressed in the Soviet Union that the Afghan opposition and all countries, which are directly or indirectly involved in the conflict and, first of all, the United States and Pakistan will choose peace and through concrete actions respond to the peaceful intentions of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. Addressing, specifically, the United States, the Soviet side again reaffirms its readiness on the basis of reciprocity to discontinue all supply of arms to the warring sides in Afghanistan from January 1.

"Time has come when the true goals and policies of concrete states in the cause of bringing about a settlement of the Afghan situation are being put to a decisive test. If the displayed goodwill remains without a constructive reply this time as well, it will be clear to the whole world who bears the entire responsibility for continuation of the fratricidal war in Afghanistan and for the maintenance of the dangerous hotbed of international tension".

Sharq on Cease-Fire, Coalition

PM3112180088 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 1 Jan 89 Morning Edition p 4

[Interview with Afghan Prime Minister Muhammad Hasan Sharq by Ye. Bay in Kabul under the rubric "Facts, Events, Opinions": "We Are Ready To Hold Talks"—date not given]

[Text] [Sharq] It is well known that immediately after the signing of the Geneva agreements the Afghan armed opposition extended the scale of hostilities and began to use rocket shells with an increased range and other modern weapons. But when we tell them: You are continuing to escalate hostilities against the people's will, the oppositionists say: You too are receiving weapons, from the Soviet Union. That was and is a crucial aspect that requires to be resolved. And the initiative of President Najibullah and M.S. Gorbachev, who proposed, first, a cease-fire and, second, an end to weapons deliveries to the two sides was very timely and correct. The resources thus freed, we stated, could be used to resolve acute social problems and restore the ar-ravaged economy. It is to that end that we ask UN assistance, it is to that end that we have proposed the holding of a conference to discuss the neutrality and demilitarization of Afghanistan, in which not only our neighbors in the region, but all states that have an interest in a political settlement and in establishing trade and economic relations with Afghanistan could take part.

The Afghans have seen once again that the Soviet Union consistently does what it says. M.S. Gorbachev's UN speech was confirmation of the guarantees that the USSR gave in signing the Geneva agreements. It was a profoundly constructive and human speech. We hope that all the countries that signed the Geneva accords will support the Soviet proposals on stopping weapons deliveries to the opposing sides in Afghanistan and will seek to establish Afghanistan's status as a neutral, nonaligned, and demilitarized state.

The aim of the speeches by M.S. Gorbachev and President Najibullah is to prepare the conditions for a comprehensive settlement of the Afghan problem. We expect the opposing sides to express support for our proposals. The Afghan Government is ready to hold talks with the armed opposition. Only in this way will we be able to achieve the goal set—the creation of a government on a broad coalition basis in the interests of the entire nation. We want talks, not unilateral disarmament, not surrender. We want the disarmament process that is gathering speed throughout the world to reach the land of Afghanistan at last. Only through mutual consultations can peace and security be achieved in our country. The talks that have begun between the Soviet delegation headed by Yu. Vorontsov, USSR first deputy foreign minister and ambassador to Kabul, and representatives of the armed opposition could give an important boost to the entire process of a political settlement. It is up to the opposing side. If it insists on a military solution to the problem, national tragedy is inevitable.

The support for our efforts in the international arena inspires us with optimism. During my trip to New York I told UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar about the proposal to establish a neutral status for Afghanistan. It is very gratifying to note that the proposal was fully supported.

The economic assistance from the Soviet Union and other countries and international organizations is extremely valuable for us. The UN programs for aid to Afghanistan are coordinated by the Aga Khan, who is very well disposed toward the Afghan authorities. We hope the process of a political settlement will grow stronger, that despite the opposition of the "irreconcilables" we will be able to create a broad coalition government, and that we will involve the efforts of many countries in the cause of restoring Afghanistan's war-ravaged economy.

Afghan General Interviewed

LD3112155388 Moscow TASS in English 1531 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] Kabul December 31 TASS—A stable situation is preserved in Afghanistan's provinces which are under the government control and it should not be changed considerably for the worse after the completion of the withdrawal of Soviet troops, Lieutenant-General Muhammad Nabi Azimi, first deputy defence minister of the Republic of Afghanistan, said in a TASS interview today.

He noted that as soon as Soviet units left several areas of the country, the anti-government forces, which receive newest weapons from the United States and some other states, went on the offensive trying to seize such provincial centres as Jalalabad, Qandahar and Mehtarlam. After heavy fighting, the opposition formations were forced to retreat without attaining their goal. The military-political situation in those areas remains tense, however.

The Afghan general pointed out that although the republic's armed forces have sufficient firepower, the military method of solving the internal Afghan conflict is inconsistent with the spirit of the time and is unsuitable to the war-ravaged country. He expressed the hope for restoring peace and national concord by peaceful means, within the framework of the reconciliation policy and the Geneva agreements.

Azimi stressed that the Afghan leadership took several steps aimed at a political settlement and the beginning of talks with the opposition on forming a coalition government. Back two years ago, after the national reconciliation policy was proclaimed, the country's armed forces ceased fire unilaterally. We did not conduct offensive operations and troops opened fire only at the request of local reconciliation commissions to protect the people's peaceful life.

It is an open secret that the die-hard opposition which holds extremist views did not observe the ceasefire. Thousands of civilians were killed and injured as a result of rocket bombardments of cities and acts of sabotage and terrorism. This is why, when a year elapsed, Afghan Army units were forced to carry out several operations against groups of extremists. Successful combat operations were conducted, in part, along the Kabul-Jalalabad-Torkham road, in the environs of Khowst and Gardeyz, and in Qandahar Province where the offensive in the direction of the border point of Spin Buldak was stopped now.

In connection with the statement of Najibullah, president of the Republic of Afghanistan, of December 30, 1988, other operations too were suspended at present, Azimi noted. Military actions against the Ahmad Shah Ma'sud formations threatening the Kabul-Hayraton road across the Salang Pass will not be carried out till January 5. After the known warning to Ahmad Shah, demanding an end to the subversive activity along the road, Afghan units equipped with modern combat equipment, concentrated in the area of Salang to launch a powerful strike if the need for it arises.

The first deputy defence minister said that the five-day ceasefire is a new peace step by the Afghan leadership, a new invitation for talks to the opposition. The president's statement and other Afghan initiatives are fully consistent with the Soviet Union's stance which was reflected in Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at the United Nations.

Responding to a question on prospects for the development of the situation after the withdrawal of the limited contingent of Soviet troops, Azimi said that despite possible complications, the Afghan Army was ready to accomplish its task to defend the country's territorial integrity, national sovereignty and independence and protect the people's peaceful life.

We have excellent weapons, including their most powerful models which have recently been supplied by the USSR. The high morale of the armed forces inspires confidence in the reality of the fulfillment of their mission. The plan to ensure Kabul's security is being formed, including special guards and detachments of the National Democratic Party of Afghanistan members.

Besides, if the opposition does not agree to the ceasefire once again, the army will deal powerful strikes at extremists in several areas of the country after January 5. We are forced to do it although the Afghan Armed Forces abide by a purely defensive military doctrine, Azimi stressed.

People Favor Cease-Fire

LD0201120589 Moscow TASS in English 1157 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Kabul January 2 TASS—The Afghan people have welcomed a new government initiative on a unilateral ceasefire from January 1, 1989 and a statement of the Soviet Foreign Ministry which expresses full support and says that all Soviet troops still in Afghanistan will also cease fire from January 1. It is being noted that the Afghan Government and the Soviet Union have taken specific steps to improve the situation in Afghanistan and restore peace and tranquility.

A meeting of the Afghan Council for Tribal Affairs held here approved the unilateral ceasefire by the Afghan Army. It noted that mutual understanding and accord among all Afghans were the only ways to resolve the Afghan issue.

However, according to reports reaching here, extremists from the anti-government "Islamic Party of Afghanistan" shelled several populated localities in Nangarhar Province and attacked security posts in Gowshtah District on Sunday morning. The insurgents retreated with losses after the Afghan Army was forced to return fire.

Internecine clashes between opposition groups of Burnaheddin Rabbani, Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and Mawlawi Muhammad Yunis Khalis, have taken place in the Kabul, Laghman, Zabol and Qandahar Provinces in the past 24 hours. More than 30 insurgents have either been killed or wounded.

The Afghan Foreign Ministry has sent two notes to U.N. observers in Kabul in protest against Pakistan's continuing arms supplies to the Afghan opposition.

Solton Comments on Initiative

LD0201150589 Moscow World Service in English 1210 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Yuriy Solton commentary]

[Text] We now turn again to topical international problems. Afghanistan is still one such problem, alas there have been no changes in the situation there so far, but the first 2 days of the new year have given new hope for a stop to the bloodshed and for national reconciliation. As of New Year's Day the government troops ceased fire and suspended all operations against the armed units of the opposition. The troops have been ordered to fight back only after they have been attacked. What is the essence of the new initiative by Kabul? A view from our commentator, Yuriy Solton.

I think the Afghan leadership has taken a bold step, writes Yuriy Solton. The unilateral cease-fire also indicates its determination to create a favorable situation for talks about national reconciliation, as well as confidence in its strength. Moscow is of a high opinion of the peace move by Kabul. The order to cease fire on 1 January was also given to the Soviet Army units that still remain in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union has again called on the United States to stop supplies of arms to the warring sides on a reciprocal basis. This is a fine opportunity to have a decisive breakthrough on a comprehensive Afghan settlement. If, (?naturally), the opposition accepts the offer and sits down to the conference table then Kabul won't be found lacking.

In a televised address to his compatriots for the new year President Najibullah confirmed his readiness to meet all the opposition leaders at any place and at any level. He proposed calling a peace assembly involving all the interested sides to bring an end to the 10-year-old war.

Reports are still coming from Afghanistan about continued military clashes in a number of provinces, but the opposition has time yet to weigh its answer properly. Kabul will be observing the unilateral cease-fire through 5 January. The cease-fire will become permanent if the other side stops its armed struggle. One would like to believe this will come true. The persistence of the implacable opposition who declare that they won't deal with the present Afghan leadership in any way is a display of political blindness and egoistic ambition, it does not lead to peace or accord.

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan is a real political force and no stable settlement is possible without it. The opposition will have to take this into account sooner or later, and, of course, the sooner the better.

A moment has come when the true aims of all parties involved in the Afghan conflict, directly or indirectly, are undergoing a resolute (?check). If there's no constructive response to this display of goodwill by the Afghan leadership, to the new peaceful initiatives of Moscow and Kabul, I believe it will be clear to anyone who is interested in a continued bloodshed in Afghanistan and in maintaining this hotbed of tension in southwest Asia.

Further Comment From Malikov

LD0201233489 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1730 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Aleksandr Malikov commentary]

[Text] The Afghan public has welcomed the new initiative by Afghanistan's leadership aimed at establishing peace and tranquillity in the country. As is known, government troops, on a unilateral basis, were given instructions to cease fire on all the republic's territory beginning 1 January 1989. The statement by the USSR Foreign Affairs Ministry, which expresses full support by our country for the peace-loving action by the Afghan leadership and which says that from that same date all subunits of Soviet troops which are still in the country will cease fire, has also been met with approval in Afghanistan. It is being noted that the leadership of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet side have once again taken concrete steps on the road to improving the situation in Afghanistan. Aleksandr Malikov has the following commentary:

[Malikov] The unilateral cease-fire is an invitation to dialogue. The invitation is being extended not for the first time. It is extended persistently and alas, not for the first time, shots can be heard in answer to it. As is known, already on the morning of 1 January, opposition groups subjected to heavy weapons fire a number of inhabited localities in Nangarhar Province. What is happening? Why aren't attempts to appeal to the common sense of the country's opposition working? Perhaps the Afghan opposition sees the latest instructions given to government troops to cease fire as some kind of display of weakness? I think that there are no real grounds for nourishing such sentiments. You see, out of all of the 30 provinces in the country, the groupings of the opposition feel more or less confident in just 6. Yes, they apply strong pressure on forces defending two of the largest towns in the country after Kabul, Jalalabad and Qandahar, but they are nonetheless unable to seize them.

A real analysis of the situation shows that no one side can achieve a decisive advantage. So where does such unceasing bellicosity come from? I think that the illusion of victory, if indeed it still exists among the ranks of the opposition, is nourished not by the events taking place in the field of battle. It is maintained, fattened up, as it were, from outside, that is, artificially, and that means that like any artificial structure, it should collapse sooner or later. That is why the unilateral cease-fire, taking into account this circumstance, makes great sense, the more so since it is backed by the silence of our weapons too. It is clear that the display of goodwill, expressed in this way, opens up a unique chance for the Afghans to try to clear up relations among each other, not with fists, but around a negotiating table. It would be shortsighted to lose this chance. But is it not utopian to think now that the opposition will respond after all?

Hopes for a move toward dialogue inspire moderate circles in the Afghan opposition camp. Although their influence is perhaps not decisive, it is significant. The moderates see nothing bad in seeking possible compromise. Their views on prospects for a settlement contain much that is rational and in common with the plans of the United Nations Organization. Incidentally, the moderates propose not only all kinds of assistance for a possible UN forces mission but are also ready even to work under them.

In a word, in such a position there are grounds to achieve compromise. Obviously just such inclinations should be encouraged and stimulated if one is to show a real and not just a decorative interest in settling the Afghan conflict. In this sense it is natural to expect constructive actions from the other side, on the part of the United States and Pakistan. For example, a statement by our country's Foreign Affairs Ministry stresses that the Soviet side, addressing the United States, once again confirms its readiness, on a reciprocal basis, to halt all deliveries of weapons to the sides at war with one another in Afghanistan as of 1 January. However, the U.S. side is maintaining silence. It is a pity.

You see the search for a consensus on the Afghan question is painstaking joint work and as in any common business nobody should be trying to keep aloof here or trying to offload their burden onto somebody else's back. You see we are also talking about the fate of peace and not just in one of the regions of the world. The Afghan test that is now once again being taken in the United States and Pakistani capitals is a test of adherence to new political thinking, to the spirit of cooperation, for the benefit of a secure future for all people.

Combat Operations Continue in Afghanistan

Zurmat, Khowst Districts

LD3112093788 Moscow TASS in English 0925 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] Kabul December 31 TASS—Government troops continue operations against gangs of extremists from among the die-hard opposition. Combat operations were conducted in Zurmat and Khowst Districts, in the environs of the city of Ghazni and in Pashtun Kowt District in the past 24 hours, according to a military command communique.

Afghan Army units destroyed a large amoung of weapons, including heavy arms in Herat, Lowgar and Konduz Provinces during operations to rout groups of extremists. Internecine clashes between rival groups in Balkh, Herat and Nangarhar left killed and injured.

Another 400 people, residents of Qandahar Province, have returned to the homeland from abroad in recent days. All repatriates received the necessary aid and were transported by the state to places of their permanent residence.

The Foreign Ministry has forwarded the 167th note to the U.N. observer mission. The document expresses a protest against the ongoing supplies by Pakistan of weapons to gangs of extremists, which leads to the escalation of combat operations against the sovereign state, BAKHTAR News Agency reports.

1 Jan Fighting in Nangarhar

LD0101182689 Moscow TASS in English 1816 GMT 1 Jan 89

[Text] Kabul January 1 TASS—The first day of 1989 has become the first day of unilateral ceasefire by Afghan Armed Forces.

However, according to reports reaching here, extremists from the anti-government "Islamic Party of Afghanistan" launched heavy artillery fire at several populated localities in Nangarhar Province and attacked security posts in the Gowshtah District. The insurgents retreated with losses after the Afghan Army was forced to open retaliatory fire.

In his T.V. address to compatriots on Sunday evening, President Najibullah expressed the hope that the ceasefire could mark an important step to peace, if it is observed by all the opposing parties. He emphasised that the Afghan Army is strong enough to rebuff any enemy subversive activities now and after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

Opposition Groups Shell Cities

LD0201200189 Moscow TASS in English 1948 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Kabul January 2 TASS—Armed anti-government opposition groups of the "Islamic Party of Afghanistan" again shelled a number of Afghan populated localities on the second day of ceasefire announced by the Afghan leadership. Dozens of missiles and shells hit Qandahar suburbs on Monday killing three people and wounding six, the BAKHTAR News Agency reports.

The rebels also shelled the cities of Gardeyz, Khowst and Jalalabad. Afghan troops were forced to fire back. During the day 60 extremists were killed and about 100 wounded. Repulsing attacks of the opposition forces, Afghan Army units captured and destroyed a large amount of weapons, including jet projectiles, grenade launchers and mortars.

Perez de Cuellar Calls for Afghan Dialogue

LD0101101689 Moscow TASS in English 0905 GMT 1 Jan 89

[Text] New York January 1—The U.N. secretary general Javier Perez de Cuellar called on all the Afghans on the last day of the outgoing year to exert efforts to start an inter-Afghan dialogue, to set up a broadly representative government and to ensure the peaceful conditions necessary for the voluntary and safe repatriation of refugees.

The U.N. secretary general welcomed the positive steps taken of late towards a peaceful settlement of the Afghan problem. He expressed concern about the slow progress made in this direction and the continuing sufferings of the Afghan people both within the country and abroad. Perez de Cuellar expressed readiness to render all out assistance to the Afghan people in their sincere efforts and the hope that 1989 would see and end to the long and tragic war in Afghanistan, would be an year of peace and rehabilitation in that country.

Reaction to Zahir Shah Involvement Reviewed

PM0301112189 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 30 Dec 88 Morning Edition p 4

[IZVESTIYA press service report: "Afghanistan: Supporters and Opponents of a Settlement"]

[Text] The foreign press is continuing to comment on the possibility of the former king of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, participating in a peace settlement in Afghanistan.

Italy's ANSA reports that "Afghan circles in Rome deem former Afghan king Zahir Shah's talks with Yu.M. Vorontsov, USSR first deputy foreign minister and USSR ambassador to Afghanistan, 'positive' and 'useful'." "These circles confirm," the agency points out, "that the sides have agreed to continue contacts." "Afghanistan's former king reacted positively to the idea expressed by Vorontsov of holding an all-Afghan conference that would make it possible to give the country an inter-Afghan transitional government supported by all national groupings."

There was also a reaction in Washington. So, U.S. Under Secretary of State Armacost said at a news conference that the United States does not object to ex-King Zahir Shah participating in the formation of a new government in Kabul.

Kabul has also reacted positively to the results of the Rome meeting. AFP reported from Kabul that Asef Zaher, Afghan minister for rehabilitation and rural development, told their correspondent that after 9 years of war the Afghans "are tired" and want the return of Afghanistan's former king, Zahir Shah. According to 57-year-old Asef Zaher (he's the son of the former prime minister in King Zahir Shah's government), "the monarch wants to help restore peace..."

The Afghan opposition camp entrenched in Peshawar has a quite different attitude toward the return of Zahir Shah. Abburab Rasul Sayaf, one of the mujahidin leaders, warned that Zahir Shah is risking his life if he returns to Kabul and takes part in the government. "If Zahir Shah," he stated, "wants to play with his life, let him return to Afghanistan."

At the same time it must be pointed out that there is no unity in the Afghan opposition camp with regard to Zahir Shah. Thus, one of the leaders Hikmatyar said at a rally in the Peshawar area that Afghanistan doesn't need people like Zahir Shah. But two of the seven parties in the "seven-member alliance" boycotted this rally and the representatives of another party protested about the antimonarchism displayed there. But Sheykh S. Mojadeddi, leader of the "National Liberation Front of Afghanistan"," a member of the "alliance," stated in an interview with Saudi Arabia's 'UKAZ that the "Afghan opposition is not opposed to a meeting between Soviet representatives and the former king of Afghanistan."

According to Britain's THE TIMES, "the leaders of the moderate partisan formations are exerting pressure on Zahir Shah to study the possibility of establishing a coalition government. By this is meant the participation in it of politicians close to the Kabul regime, including the military, some of whom are fully determined to prevent the fundamentalists seizing power."

Vorontsov Arrives in Tehran To Meet Mujahidin

LD0201221789 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 2145 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Comrade Vorontsov, our country's first deputy foreign minister, arrived in Tehran on Monday. There he intends to hold talks with the leaders of the armed

Afghan groups based on the territory of Iran. In a brief statement on arrival in Tehran Comrade Vorontsov, who is also USSR ambassador in Kabul, expressed his hope that the authorities of Iran would also make efforts for progress in the talks.

Holds Talks With Velayati

LD0301080889 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 0500 GMT 3 Jan 89

[Text] USSR First Deputy Foreign Minister Vorontsov, who is also ambassador in Afghanistan, met in Tehran with Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velyati. Questions concerning the settlement of the Afghan problem were discussed. Comrade Vorontsov also intends to meet in Tehran with leaders of Afghan opposition groups based in Iran.

On arrival in Tehran, Vorontsov reminded his audience that the USSR supports President Najibullah's decision regarding a unilateral ceasefire begining 1 January throughout the territory of Afghanistan. However, yesterday showed that the opposition forces do not intend to observe the cease-fire, as several towns were shelled with rockets and projectiles.

Khomeyni's Personal Envoy Arrives in Moscow

LD0301133989 Moscow TASS in English 1302 GMT 3 Jan 89

[Text] Moscow January 3 TASS—Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, personal representative of the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran—Imam Ruhollah Musavi Khomeyni, arrived in Moscow from Tehran on Tuesday.

TASS on Soviet-Egyptian Economic Cooperation

LD3012173888 Moscow TASS in English 1657 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] Moscow December 30 TASS—"Trade and economic links between the Soviet Union and Egypt have acquired a stable tendency for onward development in recent years and 1988 has illustrated this", Vladimir Mordvinov, deputy minister of foreign economic relations of the USSR, said in a TASS interview.

"The value of contracts for technical assistance to the Arab Republic of Egypt by the USSR amounted to 155 million roubles last year, let alone a purely commercial exchange. These contracts envisage interaction of Soviet organisations and their Egyptian partners primarily in fitting out with new equipment the Helway metal works, one of the largest project of bilateral cooperation, and the drafting of a project for its modernisation".

"Business executives in the USSR and Egypt now work to develop the key long-term directions for expanding economic links in the near future", the deputy minister said. "In ferrous metallurgy, for instance, it is planned to boost the capacities of the Helway works from the present 1.5 million to 2.5-3 million tonnes of steel a year. In non-ferrous metallurgy—to expand rolled aluminium production. Opportunities are explored for cooperation in building a 1,200 mW thermal power station in Sinai with two power transmission lines with a total length of 150 kilometers, a coal port to process three million tonnes of coal a year, in producing nephelines, fertilizers, retooling old and erecting new glass factories".

"Certainly, economic ties between the USSR and Egypt are of a mutually beneficial nature", Mordvinov said in conclusion. "For instance, we hope that Egyptian firms will take part in building several projects in the Soviet Union—hotels, tourist complexes, and hospitals. Besides, alongside traditional forms of cooperation, we explore prospects for utilizing most effectively new forms in bilateral business ties, for instance, joint enterprise. The case in point at this stage is a joint production of shampoos and some consumer goods".

Boris Nurizade, chief expert of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, said that the possibility is being studied at present of setting up an Arab business club in Moscow. It is supposed to include a hotel, a restaurant, a garage with cars that can be hired, buildings for representative offices of firms and organisations of Arab countries. The club, once created, will make easier contacts between Soviet and Egyptian partners.

TASS on Normalization of Situation in Sudan

LD3012220588 Moscow TASS in English 2111 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] Khartoum December 30 TASS—The situation in the Sudanese capital normalized by today after the government at its special meeting convened on Thursday by Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi abrogated the decision taken early this week about a sharp increase of prices of a number of necessities which caused protests of many thousands in Khartoum and other areas of Sudan. The SUDAN NEWS AGENCY (SUNA) reports that Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi addressed citizens with the request to keep calm and [word indistinct] democratic institutions for resolving the arising problems.

The Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation which has a membership of over one million urged the working people to call off the general strike of protest which had paralyzed transport, means of communications, business activity in Khartoum and many other regions.

SUNA notes that the security forces used tear gas on Thursday to disperse a demonstration in the capital. An "unspecified number" of people received "slight" injuries, the report said. The Sudan Information Ministry reported that police also fired into the air. Besides that, according to the news agency, one person was killed and 19 others wounded when an "unidentified armed person" opened fire on demonstrators not far from one of the government building.

Leader of the Democratic Unionist Party Osman al-Mirghani had earlier announced the party's withdrawal from the government coalition. This measure had been caused by differences the Democratic Unionist Party has with Ummah Party and the National Islamic Front that participate in the cabinet.

Sub-Saharan Africa

'Secret Contacts' With South Africa Denied

PM3012172088 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 31 Dec 88 Morning Edition p 6

["Abbreviated" reprint of article published in THE WASHINGTON POST, carried under the heading "Moscow—Pretoria: Secret Contacts Between the Two Capitals, THE WASHINGTON POST Writes"; followed by interview with Yu.A. Yukalov, leader of the USSR Foreign Ministry African Countries Administration, by A. Ostalskiy, under the heading "Contacts—Yes, But No Secrets, Soviet Diplomat Replies"—date, place not given]

[Text] America's THE WASHINGTON POST newspaper has published an article by L. Ueymaut [as transliterated], which we publish with abbreviations.

[Ueymaut article] The peace treaty signed in Brazzaville (Congo) apparently heralds a far more important event than the end of the war in Angola. It is evidence of the birth of diplomatic relations between South Africa and the Soviet Union, which could play a decisive role.

Moscow and Pretoria look like strange partners in the international political arena, and at this stage their relations are of an unofficial, secret nature. But some American officials believe that in the next few years the two countries will probably restore official diplomatic relations, which were broken off in 1956.

Contacts between Moscow and Pretoria take several forms:

Secret meetings were held this year within the framework of talks on a peaceful settlement in Angola, as is indicated by information from American, South African, and Soviet sources. These contacts were not difficult, because a USSR Foreign Ministry representative was present as an observer at talks through the mediation of the United States. At one secret meeting the South Africans asked about the Soviet attitude to the restoration of relations.

During one recent round of the talks on Angola this month, South African Foreign Minister "Pik" Botha talked for 2 and ½ hours with Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoliy Adamishin about measures to monitor the withdrawal of Cuban troops and other matters of interest to the two countries. This was the first time since relations were broken off that high-ranking officials from the two countries had met on an official basis.

A Soviet journalist from the newspaper IZVESTIYA recently visited South Africa, for the first time in many years. His trip was undertaken on the basis of an invitation from a high-ranking member of the South African cabinet to a Soviet official representative. The correspondent was given the opportunity to meet with many prominent representatives of the Afrikaner elite, from the head of the Reform Church to the president of the country. At the same time several prominent white South African journalists were recently permitted to visit the Soviet Union.

This year the Soviets prevented the expulsion of South Africa from the IAEA. As a high-ranking South African spokesman explained, they achieved this "through a behind-the-scenes struggle and their influence on the 'Group of 77,' a group of nonaligned countries." He noted that these actions are a "graphic example of what the Soviets could do for us."

Business contacts have also played a certain part in relations between the Soviet Union and South Africa. The two countries cooperated successfully in trade deals involving gold and diamonds. According to the American scientist Kurt Campbell, 95 percent of all Soviet diamonds are sold through the Central Sales Organization in Europe, which is controlled by the South African firm De Beers. As for gold, Campbell notes, the Soviets and South Africa between them control a significant proportion of the total volume of supplies, and sell gold via Geneva. "They undoubtedly act together, but no one can prove it," he notes.

One of the most remarkable changes in Soviet thinking is undoubtedly the Soviet Union's new approach to South Africa, which is evidence of the new principles of diplomacy pursued by M.S. Gorbachev. As one high-ranking Soviet representative notes, the Soviet "assessment of the situation in South Africa has become more pragmatic." Moscow no longer believes that the South African regime will fall only as a result of armed struggle.

Two Soviet African specialists who have been studying this question for a long time—Gleb Starushenko and Viktor Goncharov, deputy directors of the Africa Institute—have adopted surprising new positions. Goncharov has criticized the African National Congress [ANC], an organization supported by the Soviet Union which leads the struggle against apartheid and for dogmatic formulations. (V. Goncharov denies this—Editor's note). Starushenko has stated that the South African Government that comes to power after apartheid should protect the rights of the white minority.

The process of a peaceful settlement in Angola could indeed become a model of how the superpowers can create what was lacking in the first stage of detente: a structure for settling conflicts in the Third World. If the spirit of cooperation persists, it will help to resolve even what is probably the most insoluble regional problem—the problem of South Africa. [Ueymaut ends]

We asked Yu.A. Yukalov, leader of the USSR Foreign Ministry African Countries Administration, to comment on the American newspaper article.

[Ostalskiy] Yuriy Alekseyevich, please answer the main question: Will we be seeing a South African embassy in Moscow in the next few years? Or is THE WASHINGTON POST wrong?

[Yukalov] No, it is wrong. THE WASHINGTON POST is a reputable newspaper. The suppositions put forward by the author of this article are simply mistaken. Perhaps the author was guided by good intentions—the desire to see a more active role for the Soviet Union in changing the existing regime in South Africa. But unfortunately the newspaper is expounding events not on the basis of what the participants have said, but only on hearsay. Hence, clearly, the conjectures that are inevitable in such cases. The USSR's position with regard to the apartheid regime remains unchanged. The establishment of diplomatic relations with that regime in the form in which it now exists is ruled out.

[Ostalskiy] But all the same: Have we had "secret contacts" with South Africa, or not?

[Yukalov] There has been nothing "hush-hush and secret," at least not recently—in the period of talks on a settlement in southwestern Africa. Our observer's role at these talks was never passive, on the contrary, it was very active. Our constructive contribution to the attainment of agreements is emphasized by all the participants in the talks, including South Africa, as well as the United States. It is quite natural that in this context there were also contacts with Pretoria's representatives. We did not publicize them, regarding this as a normal means of tackling such a complex task, but we did not conceal them either. A few years ago secret contacts did indeed take place, but they were connected with attempts to free our geologists who had been seized by Renamo [Mozambique National Resistance] in Mozambique. IZVESTIYA wrote about this in detail. But I do not think the secrecy in this matter perplexes anyone—it was necessary to act with the utmost caution, avoiding publicity.

[Ostalskiy] Is there any progress in this matter?

[Yukalov] Unfortunately not. The fate of Gavrilov and Istomin remains unknown.

[Ostalskiy] So the fundamental position remains the same—diplomatic relations with the apartheid regime are impossible. But has anything changed in our view of southern Africa, or is everything the same as before?

[Yukalov] Naturally, restructuring and the new thinking have enabled us to take a new, more realistic look at the situation in that region too, and to seek new approaches to it. A specific example of this approach is the aforementioned role of the USSR in unraveling the conflict situation in Southwest Africa by political means.

[Ostalskiy] Does this mean that the USSR will advise the ANC to stop military operations? And how can the Soviet scientists' statements, quoted by the American newspaper, be assessed?

[Yukalov] I do not know how accurately our scientists have been quoted. But why should they not have their own opinion that differs from the official opinion? I think that is even a good thing, let there be pluralism of opinions, let the scientists argue and seek new approaches, new, unexpected views. But no one should have any doubt that the Soviet Union has supported and will support the democratic forces in South Africa that are waging a struggle against apartheid under the ANC's leadership.

[Ostalskiy] So, long live revolutionary violence?

[Yukalov] We have never absolutized the armed struggle. In the resolution of acute conflict situations we call for reliance not on force of arms, but on force of policy. The ANC leadership, as you know, also does not regard violence as the preferred course, still less as the only means of struggling for the creation of a democratic, civilized state in South Africa. It is only a reaction to the racist regime's violence against its own people—both black and white—which has been elevated to the rank of state policy.

[Ostalskiy] THE WASHINGTON POST writes that the Soviet Union prevented South Africa's expulsion from the IAEA. Is that true?

[Yukalov] Not entirely. It was not the Soviet Union alone, but the majority of members of that organization that reached the conclusion jointly that South Africa should remain in its ranks. We proceed on the basis of the need for South Africa's nuclear industry to be under international control and not to be used for military purposes. Although, to speak frankly, there were different views on this score at first, but in the end we managed to reach a common opinion.

[Ostalskiy] Now it only remains to clarify the question of economic ties. Do they exist, or not?

[Yukalov] The USSR strictly fulfills the decisions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly on sanctions against Pretoria and is a champion of the imposition of comprehensive sanctions against that regime to promote the speediest dismantling of apartheid. The Soviet Union has never broken sanctions and has no secret deals with South Africa.

[Ostalskiy] But what about the reports on the "division of spheres of influence" in the diamond and gold markets?

[Yukalov] I can only quote THE WASHINGTON POST: "No one can prove it." Without proof, without a single piece of evidence, you can say anything you like. Reading the tea leaves is in general, in my opinion, a waste of time, and especially with regard to economics and politics.

[Ostalskiy] One last question: What is your view of Soviet journalists' trips to South Africa?

[Yukalov] I think the Soviet public should be as fully informed as possible about what is happening in South Africa. Such trips naturally have nothing to do with political ties or recognition of the apartheid regime. Incidentally, the reportages recently published in IZVESTIYA, from your correspondent in South Africa, aroused great interest among readers, including Foreign Ministry workers.

APN, Namibia Press Agency Sign Agreement

MB2712200588 Moscow in English to Southern Africa 1800 GMT 24 Dec 88

[Text] A Soviet press agency, APN, and the Namibian Press Agency, NAMPA, have signed an agreement on cooperation and the exchange of information in Luanda, Angola. The sides agreed, in particular, to have regular exchanges of literary and photographic material, and encourage mutual visits of journalists.

West Europe

FRG Firm Denies Chemical Supplies Sent to Libya

LD0201220189 Moscow TASS in English 2130 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Bonn January 3 TASS—Jurgen Happenstiel-Imhausen, head of the West German firm Imhausen-Chemie, has refuted U.S. accusation to the effect that the firm delivered to Libya equipment for the production of chemical weapons. A most active campaign was launched in the U.S. recently over Libya's alleged intention to start the production of chemical weapons, which was refuted point-blank by Libya.

Responding to U.S. accusations, Happenstiel-Imhausen said in an interview with the Deutschefunk broadcasting station that the firm had nothing to do with that. We have neither equipment, nor technology for the production of chemical weapons, and the only thing we delivered to Libya was an installation for the production of polyethylene, he said.

The results of an investigation conducted on the instructions of Chancellor Helmut Kohl by the West German Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Economy and Finance show that the accusations against the West German firm are groundless. According to Karlheinz von Den Drisch, finance ministry spokesman, nothing has been found so far that would confirm the firm'guilt. By all appearances, there is nothing to investigate here, he added.

Greetings Sent to German Communists on Jubilee

PM3012121588 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 30 Dec 88 Second Edition p 1

[CPSU Central Committee greetings message to GDR, FRG, West Berlin Communists on 70th anniversary of Communist Party of Germany]

[Text] To the SED Central Committee

The German Communist Party [DKP] Board

The Socialist Unity Party of West Berlin [SEW] Board

Dear Comrades!

We cordially congratulate the communists of the GDR, the FRG, and West Berlin on an outstanding date in the history of the international and German workers movement—the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Germany [KPD].

The SED, the DKP, and the SEW, having grasped the glorious revolutionary and internationalist traditions of the KPD, the party of K. Liebknecht, R. Luxemburg, and E. Thaelmann, are continuing and enriching them under new conditions. We value highly the feelings of friendship and fraternity linking the CPSU with the SED, the DKP, and the SEW.

On this portentous day Soviet Communists wish all Communists of the GDR, the FRG, and West Berlin successes in their work for the good of the working people and in the struggle for the ideals of democracy and socialism.

CPSU Central Committee

Latin America & Caribbean

Celebrations Mark Cuban National Liberation Day

Castro Praises Achievements

LD0201113889 Moscow TASS in English 1127 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Santiago de Cuba January 2 TASS—"We can be sure now, 30 years after the triumphant Cuban revolution, that the Cuban people will forever remain committed to the principles of socialism and Marxism-Leninism. And we shall always strive to continue our revolution and make it even more effective," Cuban leader Fidel Castro has said.

He was speaking here Sunday at a rally marking the 30th anniversary of the revolution.

January 1, 1959 was not only a day of triumph but also a day when crucial decisions were taken concerning Cuba's future, Castro said, pointing to the highly important role played in this by Santiago de Cuba, a city with long-standing and glorious revolutionary traditions.

Turning to the affairs of today, the Cuban leader mentioned the issue of Cuban troops performing an internationalist mission in Angola.

The victory of Cuban internationalist troops in Quito-Quanavale and the subsequent signing of agreements between Cuba, Angola and South Africa on a peaceful settlement in southwest Africa have become realities, thanks to qualities inculcated in Cubans by the struggle against Spanish colonial domination in the 19th century, and against the Batista dictatorial regime, Castro noted.

"We can be proud of our compatriots who fought for the independence of the fatherland. Their heroism did not pass without a trace. They taught us revolutionary steadfastness and allegiance to principle. It is not for nothing that our national hero Jose Marti, who taught Cubans to be faithful to revolutionary ideals, shed his blood," Castro said.

"This is the meaning of our victorious revolution of January 1, 1959," he added.

"Your revolution is today a beacon for the peoples of developing countries. We are aware of our immense responsibility for the fate of the revolution and declare with utter determination: Either the triumph of socialism and the triumph of the principles of Marxism-Leninism or death.

"This is the meaning of our slogan 'patria or muerte' which we have been upholding for all the 30 years of the Cuban revolution," the Cuban leader said.

Cuban Minister Lauds Aid

LD3112203988 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1900 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] The day 1 January marks the 30th anniversary of the victorious Cuban revolution. The CPSU Central Committee, the Supreme Soviet Presidium, and the USSR Council of Ministers have sent congratulations to Fidel Castro in connection with the momentous date.

Ernesto Melendez, minister-president of the state committee for economic cooperation, briefed Viktor Gorbachev, radio correspondent in Havana, on cooperation between our countries.

[Begin Melendez recording in Spanish with superimposed Russian translation] In the 30 years since the revolution, Soviet-Cuban cooperation has been linked with our people's efforts toward the country's economic and social development. It has encompassed virtually all aspects of the development of the economy and technology. I should like in this connection to express gratitude to Soviet specialists; their efforts have been the main factor in implementing hundreds of projects. I mean those who worked in Cuba in the first years after the revolution, as well as those who are currently working here, namely oil workers, nickel industry workers, and power transmission line assembly workers, thanks to whom we now have a unified power grid, and the most highly qualified specialists, who have come to work on building a nuclear power station.

In the current 5-year plan, plans for cooperation include over 400 projects, both new and previously built ones. There are also agreements on carrying out 23 scientific and technical programs. At the same time, it is planned to study about 50 projects which are to be the basis for an agreement on cooperation for the next 5-year period. A very important document was signed in May of this year—the concept of developing foreign economic ties between our countries for 15-20 years. We regard this as the economic and political basis for our cooperation in the long-term future. [end recording]

Cuban Envoy Delivers Speech

LD0101200289 Moscow Television Service in Russian 1530 GMT 1 Jan 89

[From the "Vremya" newscast; Cuban Ambassador Julio Camacho's Liberation Day Speech; in Spanish with superimposed Russian translation; place not given—recorded]

[Text] Dear Soviet comrades, 30 years have passed since that 1 January when, with the coming of the new year, the Cuban people acquired final and full independence and the right to build a free and sovereign homeland. The victory of the revolution, under the leadership of Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, finally brought an end to exploitation and we, at last, became the masters of our own destiny. From that day, following almost a century of selfless and heroic struggle, Cuba entered a new era.

Throughout these 30 years we have had to fight and defeat reaction, internal counterrevolution, and direct aggression organized and financed by U.S. imperialism. In this struggle, the Cuban people have again confirmed their patriotic and rebellious spirit, their readiness for self-sacrifice, their revolutionary consciousness and internationalism, and their ability to achieve significant successes in all spheres of the life of society.

From the very first day after the victory of the revolution, the Soviet Union held out a hand of solidarity to our country. During the harsh days of the imperialist blockade, aimed at economically stifling and isolating the revolution, the Soviet people gave us resolute assistance, thanks to which the Cuban people were able to stand its ground, achieve a victory, and begin to create a new society.

We have traveled the path of building socialism together. Our ties, which today are an example of sincere friendship, respect, trust, and fraternity, based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, are stronger. The ties that connect us are and will remain indestructible.

Fraternal feelings unite us today with the Soviet people, who are experiencing the grief of the catastrophic earthquake in Armenia.

Now humanity is faced with the problem of war and peace. Cuba firmly supports the policy of peace being carried out by the Soviet Union and its efforts aimed at curbing the arms race on earth and prevent its transfer into space. Cuba calls for the problems of peace, detente, and disarmament to be inseparably linked to opportunities for the development of that section of the earth's population which, on the threshold of the 21st century, lives under inhuman conditions, the victim of neocolonial oppression.

On the 30th anniversary of the revolutionary victory of 1 January, our people and its Communist Party is full of determination to go on defending its gains and to continue along the path of socialist construction. Thank you.

Vorotnikov, Delegation Arrive

LD0301035789 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0300 GMT 3 Jan 89

[Text] Havana, 3 Jan (TASS)—A Soviet party and government delegation led by V.I. Vorotnikov, CPSU Central Committee Politburo member and chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, arrived here yesterday to take part in the festivities on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Cuban revolution.

At the Jose Marti International Airport in Havana the delegation was welcomed by Jorge Risquet Valdes, Politburo member and member of the Central Committee Secretariat of the Cuban Communist Party, and other officials.

Among the welcoming party was Yu.V. Petrov, CPSU Central Committee member and USSR ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Republic of Cuba.

Yazov Greets Cuban General

PM0301144989 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 1 Jan 89 First Edition p 1

[Message from USSR Defense Minister D. Yazov to Army General Raul Castro Ruz, minister of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, on Cuban "Liberation Day"; date not given]

[Text] Esteemed Comrade Minister!

On behalf of the USSR Armed Forces and myself I send you and all soldiers of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces combat greetings and cordial congratulations on the Liberation Day national holiday.

The revolution victory on 1 January 1959 opened up a broad path for the Cuban people to build a new life. The great successes achieved over the past 30 years by the country's working class, peasants, and intelligentsia in the political, socioeconomic and cultural spheres are convincing testimony to this.

On this jubilee day I wish Cuban soldiers further success in the work of strengthening their socialist motherland's defense capability.

May the inviolable fraternal friendship and combat collaboration of the Soviet and Cuban peoples and armies strengthen and develop!

With communist greetings

[Signed] Army General D. Yazov, USSR defense minister

Castro Interviewed on Planned Gorbachev Visit

PM3012115188 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 24 Dec 88 Morning Edition p 5

[Interview with Fidel Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee and president of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, by IZVESTIYA Political Observer Vitaliy Kobysh: "'Even Now We Have To Wage a Difficult Struggle"; at Havana Airport; date not given]

[Text] This conversation took place under unusual conditions. Fidel Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee and president of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, was once again on the airfield at Havana Airport. On the first day he had been seeing off aircraft with plasma and medical and other equipment for the victims of the earthquake in Armenia. On this day he had come here to address kind parting words to more than 100 physicians, nurses, and other specialists who had volunteered to help the people hit by the disaster. Fidel Castro shook everyone's hand and found special, warm words for everyone.

The aircraft had taken off, but the Cuban leader remained on the airfield for a long time. The iron, unbending Fidel was clearly moved. Nevertheless, he did not forget IZVESTIYA's request and himself invited its correspondent to have a chat.

There were many people all around—both our own and Cubans—and our conversation was hindered by the roar of aircraft engines. In addition, Fidel Castro still had a heap of things to tackle on that day. The conversation took place, nonetheless.

[Kobysh] Comrade Fidel, your first reaction to the report of the tragedy in Armenia was to go to a donor center and give some of your blood for the victims of the earthquake. Believe me, that is more to us than an expression of human compassion or a symbol of Soviet-Cuban friendship. Such a thing does not get forgotten.

[Castro] What of my blood.... I am sure that every Cuban is ready to share his blood with his Soviet brothers. Thousands of them have already been to donor centers.

I have no doubt at all that your people would do just the same if such a disaster were to befall us. We are welded together by unbreakable friendship. And we always remember your assistance to our country, to independent socialist Cuba.

The support and assistance which all the Soviet republics are now giving to Armenia confirm how important it is to be united. Imagine how things would stand and how everything would change if such unity existed here, in Latin America. If any disaster were to happen in one of the countries on our continent, the others would at once come to its assistance and give real, active help, not just symbolic help, as most frequently happens now.

Armenia is a small republic which has been hit by a disaster of huge proportions. How many years would it take if it had to cope alone with the consequences of this tragedy? Twenty? Or more? Being part of the USSR, Armenia will, maybe, be able to eliminate the aftermath of the earthquake in 2 years with the help of the other Soviet republics. This is what a community of like-minded people means.

[Kobysh] I know that you personally, like the entire Cuban people, attached great significance to the visit of Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, who was to have come to Havana straight from New York. Have Cubans been left with a sense of bitterness in connection with the fact that this visit did not take place?

[Castro] Of course they have, but we too have been shaken by what happened in Armenia and understand perfectly well that the CPSU Central Committee general secretary had to return home immediately. M.S. Gorbachev's visit meant a very great deal to us. The Soviet Union is our friend and a country we really love and which has always cooperated with us, shown real friendship toward us, and been with us during the hardest times. We viewed this visit as the coming of a friend.

I have already had the pleasure of meeting with M.S. Gorbachev, and I retain wonderful memories of meetings with him, of the freshness of his views, his mind, and his art of conducting a dialogue. He and I discussed a great deal. M.S. Gorbachev's coming to Cuba—and we believe that it will take place—will provide an excellent opportunity for a new exchange of opinions on problems of particular interest to us: the questions of international politics and the maintenance of lasting peace to which the Soviet leader devotes so much effort.

[Kobysh] On the day M.S. Gorbachev was addressing the UN General Assembly session in New York I was in Havana and saw for myself the interest aroused in Cuba by that speech. What, from your viewpoint, was particularly important for Cubans and for the whole of Latin America in that speech?

[Castro] Everything was important: from the very fact that the CPSU Central Committee general secretary and USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium chairman spoke from the UN rostrum, to the profoundly revolutionary purport of what he said and the proposals he advanced. That speech confirmed yet again that socialism is paving mankind's way to the future.

I will not discuss all the very important proposals advanced by the CPSU Central Committee general secretary, for they are being commented on widely. I will dwell on what primarily concerns us Latin Americans. I mean the program set forth in that speech for resolving the dangerously explosive problem of the developing countries' foreign debts. M.S. Gorbachev's proposals for establishing a lengthy moratorium on certain states' debts and totally writing off others' constitute the Soviet Union's tremendous real assistance to all developing countries and, perhaps, to Latin America in particular.

The foreign debt of Latin American countries has reached the monstrous sum of $420 billion. Such a debt could have arisen only as a result of shameless colonial plundering. How can Latin American countries pay back $420 billion? Certain states on our continent are now putting everything they earn through the sweat and blood of their peoples into paying off the debts foisted on them. What is this? If this problem is not resolved sensibly and on a just basis, it will in any case not end well. There will be an explosion, this is inevitable. What M.S. Gorbachev has proposed precisely opens up the way to a sensible and just solution of this problem which is tragic for the developing countries and shameful for those who created it. I repeat that all this is of special significance for us in Latin America.

[Kobysh] There is a growing desire for economic and political integration in Latin America. I recently had the honor of holding a detailed conversation with President Jose Sarney of Brazil. He regards as one of his chief foreign policy tasks the strengthening of political ties with other Latin American countries and economic integration with them, to which, according to him, Brazil used not to devote proper attention. Jose Sarney cited you, Comrade Fidel, on this: Latin America needs a strong Brazil, for then it will find it easier to withstand U.S. diktat. He also said that this diktat is not only not growing weaker but actually increasing.

Do you agree with this?

[Castro] I fully agree. I will just add to what the president of Brazil told you: Matters are not confined to the continuing U.S. political and economic diktat with regard to Latin American states. In Central America, as is known, Washington is carrying out overt armed aggression, above all against Nicaragua. Even with regard to Cuba the threat of our revolution's suppression by any means, including military means, has not been lifted. This is why the Cuban people do not lower their vigilance for a moment.

Of course, it would be ideal to channel all our energy and all our means into the country's development. Unfortunately, we cannot allow ourselves to do this and are forced to devote so much effort and means to defense. We realize that our socialist motherland's defense might is also directly linked with its economic development. The more actively we develop production, increase labor productivity in agriculture and industry, and make more rational use of existing resources, the more we will strengthen our security.

[Kobysh] Comrade Fidel, this is the second interview you have granted me. You honored me with the first one in 1960 in New York, where you, at that time the leader of the still quite young Cuban revolution, had arrived for the UN General Assembly session. If you recall, the U.S. authorities were trying to hamper your work, even including the choice of accommodation. For a while you had to take up residence in the more than modest Teresa Hotel in black Harlem. The atmosphere was tense, and you were extremely busy too. Your agreement to answer a Soviet correspondent's questions was all the more generous.

[Castro] I remember it all well.

[Kobysh] I admit I was struck then by your confidence in complete, final victory in Cuba, which was virtually besieged by U.S. imperialism.

That was 28 years ago. All the assessments and forecasts you made then have been confirmed. And yet I have a question, the final one: What was the basis for your confidence in victory at that incredibly difficult time for the Cuban revolution?

[Castro] It was above all my belief in the Cuban people's heroism, in their insurmountable desire to free themselves from imperialist oppression, their desire for freedom and independence. I believed in my people and in the fact that our revolution would receive broad support in the world. That belief was justified, and we held out.

Cuba was the first socialist country in the Western Hemisphere and in Latin America. However, even now we have to wage a difficult struggle. But we have almost 30 years' experience behind us, and we rely on broad international aid and the support and solidarity of the Soviet Union, the entire socialist world, the peoples of Latin America, other developing countries, and all peoples. Our slogan remains as before: We will triumph!

In conclusion I wish to convey through IZVESTIYA to all Soviet people most cordial wishes for happiness and success and to say once again how highly the Cuban people value friendship with the Soviet Union.

Argentine Paper Praises Gorbachev Policy

LD0101120989 Moscow TASS in English 1035 GMT 1 Jan 89

[Text] Buenos Aires January 1 TASS—"The Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev was the most outstanding political personality in the international arena last year." This is how the influential Argentinian newspaper HERALDO assesses the foreign policy efforts of the general secretary of the CPSU CC and president of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

The Soviet leader, the newspaper points out, continued to hold the political initiative due to his bold proposals aimed at putting an end to the confrontation between the East and the West, primarily between the USSR and the United States. Hand-in-hand with President Reagan he was able to reduce substantially the international tensions that had kept the world on the brink of a thermonuclear catastrophe.

Having displayed in practice the principles of new mentality, the Soviet leader used all his authority to settle peacefully the problems of Afghanistan, the Middle East, Kampuchea, Angola and of other hot spots. His 1988 foreign policy endeavours were crowned by the speech in the United Nations, where he announced on behalf of the USSR a reduction of Soviet armed forces which is bound to give fresh impetus to the negotiations on conventional armaments, the Argentinian newspaper stressed.

Trade, Economic Agreement Signed With Panama

LD0201175289 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1308 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Panama, 2 Jan (TASS)—Panama's legislative assembly has approved by a majority of votes, as a law of the republic, an agreement on trade and economic cooperation with the USSR. The draft of the appropriate document was put up for examination and approval by the government assembly of President Manuel Solis Palma on 29 November last year.

The agreement envisages the development, on a mutually favorable and equitable basis, of import-export operations between the two countries. All calculations will be done in convertible currency and in keeping with the laws of the two countries. The sides are committed to working out, by the agreed on times, questions of financing, transportation of goods, technological cooperation, and the organization of exhibitions and fairs.

Adoption of the law on the trade and economic agreement with the USSR was preceded by intensive discussion in the country's mass media, and in numerous debates and roundtables that were organized at the university and in public institutes. Representatives of the political parties of both the ruling coalition and the opposition, the trade unions, and Panama's business circles had, overall, a very interested and positive assessment of the prospects for bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Scientific Exchange Agreement Signed With Guyana

LD3112201788 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0930 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] Georgetown, 31 Dec (TASS)—In the new year of 1989, collaboration between the USSR and the Cooperative Republic of Guyana will further develop; the program that was signed on Friday here, for cultural and scientific exchanges between the two countries for the period up to 1990, is evidence of that. The document was signed in accordance with an intergovernmental agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation which was concluded in 1978 in Moscow.

The program envisages an exchange of visits by scientists and of scientific publications and research projects, and likewise envisages the granting of stipends to Guyanan citizens for studying at Soviet higher education establishments. There are plans for joint measures dedicated to prominent historical events of the two countries, for the exchange of artistic collectives and of exhibitions, and for the arrangement of contacts between creative organizations of the USSR and Guyana.

Moreover, expansion is planned of ties between youth, women's and other public organizations of the two countries, and cooperation in the sphere of medicine, physical culture and sport is to be strengthened. Cecil Rajana, head of the department for International Economic Cooperation in the Secretariat of the president of Guyana, who spoke at the solemn program-signing ceremony, stressed that a new important stage in the development of mutually advantageous and fruitful Guyanan-Soviet relations is opening up with the signing of the document.

Political & Social

Gorbachev Delivers New Year's Address

LD3112143788 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1248 GMT 31 Dec 88

[New Year's address by CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow—recorded]

[Text] Dear comrades! In a few minutes, the year 1988 will pass into history, and the new year 1989 will come into its own. As always at this frontier of time, we look back at what has been lived through and experienced, at what we have done and have not yet done, and reflect on what awaits us ahead. Each year takes a different form for each individual, for the family, and for the people. What was the year now ending like for us Soviet people? What main events of the year will remain in the people's memory? I think you will agree that it was a watershed year in many respects—a year of further development of the processes of restructuring, the opening up and affirmation of the new in all spheres, in the economy, politics, and social and spiritual life. The year now ending will remain in our memory as the year of the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference, the influence of which we shall feel for a long time to come. I would say that it was a true school, a school of democracy, a school of responsibility for the country and the destiny of socialism.

The atmosphere of glasnost and openness helped to unleash a discussion on the most varied issues in our life. This helped the search for truth and the deep study and adoption of decisions for which the time was due. We continued work to reestablish historical justice, to revive the Leninist concept of socialism, to develop the ideology of renweal, and to enrich the spiritual culture of the people. The year now ending was marked by large-scale work in restructuring the economy, the success of which is vitally necessary for us. It is ending with better indicators for national income and labor productivity, better then last year. More food, goods, and services have been produced, and more housing, social and cultural amenities, and public utilities have been built.

Yet the economic reform has not yet started to work at full capacity; and the results which have been obtained cannot satisfy us. Shortages and other difficulties of everyday life which have not yet been overcome are making themselves felt. Production of goods, especially those of good quality, is lagging behind demand for them. We have a lot to do next year to change the situation in the economy decisively for the better. And these changes will come. They will come together with financial autonomy, self-financing, leasing, and contracting, the strengthening of cooperatives, the improvement of relations within the economy, and the expansion of scope for initiative and socialist enterprise. All of us must decide upon such work as will make it possible to overcome chronic ailments, to eliminate shortages of all kinds, and to create a new quality of life for the Soviet people.

We have embarked on radical reform in the political sphere. Today one can see clearer than ever before the vital necessity of establishing a law-governed socialist state, where the interests of the individual will serve as the yardstick of all and everything, where citizens' rights and freedoms will be ensured, and wide opportunities furnished for participating in running the affairs of the state and society and for displaying capabilities and talents, and where, at the same time, there exists the rule of law, socialist law and order is ensured, and conscious discipline triumphs.

The election campaign which has begun, and the First Congress of USSR People's Deputies will be of immense importance for the destiny of restructuring.

Ahead of us lies the next important phase of the political reform, which has as its aim the harmonization of interethnic relations. I do not wish and I simply do not have the right to depict the general picture here as rosy. Restructuring has given rise to great expectations in society. But the changes are proceeding with difficulty and not as fast as we would all like them to. This is explained in large measure not only by the inertia of the past but is also bound up with the novelty of the problems, and with the real difficulties of organizing life in a new way.

We have taken a decisive step in the development of democracy and glasnost and in overcoming command-administrative methods, but very often [splosh i ryadom] this work is coming up against the resistance of conservative antirestructuring forces. One cannot fail to see this.

Others develop the desire to resolve everything at a stroke, not taking into account what is possible. Some people are totally perplexed by the difficulties. But the main thing is that restructuring is enabling the true champions and adherents of the renewal of society—and these people are in the majority—to spread their wings, and is increasing their energy and efficiency. It is precisely this which we now need most of all.

We must not think, comrades, that someone will solve our problems for us, that everything around us will change at the wave of a magic wand as midnight strikes on New Year's Eve.

No. We must create the future ourselves, help restructuring by our actions, and strive for radical changes in each town and village and each workplace; such is the command of our time, today's immediate task.

The responsibility borne by Lenin's party in this crucial period is greater than ever before. While setting the tone of restructuring, the party itself is going through a period of renewal; profound changes are taking place within the party, despite all the complexities of this process. This is confirmed by the present report-back and election campaign in the party organizations. Wherever they may happen to work, Communists cannot remain on the sidelines of the changes taking place in society. They should be the most ardent champions of everything new that is entering our life.

The end of the year has brought severe suffering: The devastating earthquake that hit Armenia and cost thousands of lives is our common misfortune. During that terrible disaster, however, the best qualities of the human spirit were demonstrated, the sincere compassion and solidarity of the Soviet people and all the peoples of our country. Our misfortune evoked fervent sympathy and response from all parts of the world. The strength of internationalist brotherhood of peoples has been displayed especially vividly over this period. The common will of the Soviet people is that new towns and villages be built in place of the ruins over the next few years. The people of Armenia may rest assured that this will be the case.

Dear comrades, the outgoing year will remain in our memories as one of great changes for the better in international relations. A lot of the credit for this goes to our state, which is acting on the world stage in the spirit of the new political thinking. Without deviating from our principles, we are striving to more sensitively heed the views of all members of the world community and to expand and intensify joint dialogue on the fundamental issues of world development. I spoke of all these things not so long ago in my speech at the United Nations. Shadows of the past do, of course, exist in world politics, but they are already fading. A new vision of the world is being established. It seems that the tight knots in international relations are beginning to loosen. The cold war is starting to retreat: Together with the socialist countries and other peoples, we shall do our utmost to ensure that mankind puts it behind them and enters a period of peace, to ensure that their material resources and intellectual capabilities are wholly redirected to the aims of peace, construction, and cooperation.

Comrades, the incoming year does not promise to be and will not be one without problems. Many serious matters and concerns lie ahead. We see that today we must act with greater resolution. It is impossible to outwit life, to sit it out on the sidelines. We are not expecting and do not promise you manna from heaven. We are well aware that the burden of unresolved questions is heavy. Our road is difficult. But the choice has been made, and the course for restructuring has been mapped out. Soviet people support the restructuring, and that is the most reliable guarantee that our ship of state will gain speed more and more assuredly.

Dear comrades and friends, dear fellow countrymen, great but also inspiring work awaits us for the good of the fatherland, for the good of the world. We step into the New Year with a clear awareness of this.

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, and the USSR Council of Ministers, I congratulate you on the New Year holiday. May you have happiness and peace, dear comrades! Happy New Year!

Supreme Court Sentences Churbanov, Others

LD3012205088 Moscow TASS in English 2032 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] Moscow December 30 TASS—The hearing of the case of bribery with which a number of former high-ranking officials of the Ministry of the Interior were charged, was concluded in the USSR Supreme Court today.

The defendants in the trial were former First Deputy Minister of the Interior of the USSR Yuriy Churbanov, Uzbekistan's Minister of the Interior Khaydar Yakhyayev, Uzbekistan's Deputy Ministers of the Interior Petr Begelman and Tashtemir Kakhramanov, chiefs of Uzbekistan's regional departments of the interior (for Tashkent, Namangan, Kashka-Darya, Khorezm and Bukhara regions) Muin Norov, Salim Sabirov, Dzhamal Dzhamalov, Yakub Makhamadzhanov, Khushvakt Norbutayev.

Member of the Supreme Court of the USSR, Deputy Chairman of the Military Collegium, Major General of Justice Mikhail Marov was president of the court. USSR Assistant Prosecutor General Aleksandr Sboyev was state prosecutor. Lawyers of the Moscow city bar acted as defence.

The trial lasted for four months and caused public repercussions. During the hearing of the case, the hall of court meetings in the building of the USSR Supreme Court was filled by Muscovites, relatives of the defendants, other citizens.

Correspondents of the Soviet national newspapers and magazines, as well as foreign journalists, representatives of the world's biggest news agencies, radio and television companies of many countries were present at the trial. Workers of documentary cinema and correspondents of Soviet radio and television filmed the opening of the trial and the making of statements.

During the hearing of the case necessary measures were taken for full and thorough analysis of proofs provided by bodies of pretrial investigation. Some 200 witnesses gave testimony. Dozens of protocols of the questioning of witnesses who failed to appear in the court for valid reasons were read out. Video recordings of confrontations were watched. Material evidence was inspected. Decisions were made on numerous applications of participants in the trial.

The court established that Churbanov had taken bribes to a total sum of 90,960 roubles and had also abused his position for gain. Begelman was found guilty of taking bribes to a sum of 45,200 roubles, Norbutayev 49,008 roubles, Dzhamalov 21,000 roubles, Makhamadzhanov 16,458 roubles, Norov 26,470 roubles, Sabirov 14,000 roublec. Besides that, Begelman, Dzhamalov and Norov were found guilty of giving bribes while Norbutayev was found guilty of abusing his position for gain. Norov was also found guilty of mediation in passing on bribes.

Determining punishment by cumulation of crimes with taking into account their gravity and the personality of the defendants the court sentenced Churbanov to 12 years of imprisonment, Norbutayev to 10 years of imprisonment, Norov and Begelman to 9 years, Dzhamalov, Makhamadzhanov and Sabirov to 8 years of imprisonment. All of them are to serve the sentences in correctional labour colonies of a strict regime. The property of all of them will be confiscated and monetary funds they took as bribes will go to the state treasury.

The guilt of Tashtemir Kakhramov has not been confirmed during the trial. He was acquitted and discharged from custody in the courtroom.

During the hearing it was established that the investigation has additional several volumes of files regarding defendant Yakhyayev. The episodes in the files are connected with the charges of bribe taking referred against him earlier. In this connection the court singled out Yakhayev case into a separate proceeding and sent the materials to the USSR Office of Public Prosecutor for additional investigation. As Yakhyayev suffers from a number of serious diseases and has been detained for over three years, the court changed the measure to secure the appearance of the defendant and discharged him from custody, securing his cognizance not to leave.

At this point the president of the court announced that the trial is over.

Prosecutor Comments on Trial

LD3012231688 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1900 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Interview with State Prosecutor Aleksandr Vasilyevich Sboyev, assistant of the USSR procurator general and senior justice counselor, by unidentified correspondent—recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] Aleksandr Vasilyevich, what is your opinion of the Churbanov trial, which has lasted nearly 4 months?

[Sboyev] It is difficult to speak just 5 minutes after the announcement of the verdict. It needs to be considered and analyzed without haste. However, many questions arise. There are things, too, that are not comprehensible.

[Correspondent] During the preliminary investigation a vast amount of video material was filmed incriminating the criminals, but the court restricted itself to watching just 40 minutes. How would you comment on this?

[Sboyev] I have spoken about this. I claim that the court committed an infringement. Extracting fragments from the video recordings and basing conclusions on these fragments is not right. The tapes need to be viewed, their essence needs to be grasped, and it is necessary to see what the situation was there—and this was all evident. I do know why the court did not want to do this. I perceive in this matter some undervaluing of video technology—if you like, some backwardness in this respect on the part of the Supreme Court.

[Correspondent] How many witnesses were interrogated during the investigation process?

[Sboyev] Under the indictment, about 500 persons were called to testify. In all, only 160 of them were interrogated, and 20 relatives of the accused, whose interrogation was by no means a necessity. Thus, the majority of the people found themselves beyond the sphere of the court's activity. Galina Brezhneva did not attend, allegedly because of illness.

[Correspondent] What is your view? The sentences were very mild. After all, you demanded severer sentences for the accused. Now we see that two of them have even been released from custody.

[Sboyev] A strange picture emerges. Two persons renounced their testimonies—namely, Yakhyayev and Kakhramanov—and the court freed them. All those who admitted to their testimonies received sentences. I think that obviously bribery cases can scarcely be decided in such a primitive way. It is always being said that there is no objective evidence, even when there are admissions by the giver and recipient of monetary bribes. What more objective evidence could there be, when all these deals take place in private? Bribes are not handed over in public squares. It think that this is an oversimplified approach to the assessment of evidence.

Article Examines Trial

PM0101201489 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 2 Jan 89 Morning Edition p 4

[Article by Yu. Feofanov: "NCO With Stripes on His Pants: Sensational and Logical Features of the Recent Trial"]

[Text] It was a "No 1" sensation—the arrest of a first deputy minister of internal affairs, a colonel general, only recently an RSFSR Supreme Soviet deputy and a candidate member of the CPSU Central Committee. The arrest and committal for trial of Churbanov and another eight top militia officials of Uzbekistan. But the real sensation, in my view, was the verdict. To see why, we will have to take a closer look at it and tell our readers about the course of events at the trial and before.

Let us not pretend: The figure of Churbanov and his "case" aroused worldwide interest. Long before the trial began, myths had already grown up about the sums stolen. And when, in private conversations, I mentioned the figures cited in the charge, people were disappointed, although the sums are considerable. Especially since magazines "over there" had already published photomontages of Churbanov with millions of rubles and piles of gold, while our newspapers were ranking him with Yezhov and Beriya.

But even notoriety was not enough to make Yuriy Mikhaylovich glamorous. In himself he was small fry, and he sank into the kind of criminal activities that are typical of corrupt circles. All the same, whatever anyone may say and however hard we may try to convince ourselves that this is an ordinary trial of a corrupt careerist who stooped to bribery, all the same there is no getting away from the fact that he was not simply a high-ranking official, but somebody's son-in-law. That was the paradox of the situation, and posed great difficulty for the court.

Before fortune smiled on this outwardly attractive man, he served as a Komsomol functionary, and then began little by little to move up the ladder in the internal troops. Then, all of a sudden, a general's stripes were sewn onto this senior lieutenant's pants. It was enough to turn a weak head. He would hardly have been capable of organizing, say, a criminal gang or heading a mafia clan. He was only capable of becoming a son-in-law. But that was enough for people to start handing him sums of 10,000, 30,000, and 50,000 at a time.

His own evidence and the evidence of those who handed it over, as well as other proof, provided grounds for charging Churbanov with receiving bribes totaling R650,000. (The sum admitted in the verdict was 90,000, but at the moment I am talking about the preliminary investigation.) First he admitted everything, then he started changing his evidence: He denied the charge of receiving 220,000 through Begelman, and some charges were lifted in the course of the investigation. What about the rest? Let me quote his evidence, which is recorded in the indictment.

January 24, 1987: "I wish to purge my conscience before the party and the state, and I understand that I can prove my decency only through my own concrete actions."

January 25, in a letter to the general prosecutor: "The money is at the dacha in Zhukovka; a diagram of the hiding places is attached."

January 26: "I gave false information about Zhukovka; I do not remember where the money is."

July 16: "I gave 300,000 to my wife Galina Brezhneva as a gift from Rashidov. She spent it on jewelry."

The next day: "My earlier evidence was precipitate. I did not give my wife any money except my wages."

July 23: "The question of money is very difficult. The point is that I have no right to compromise the family of my late father-in-law, still less his memory."

December 4, 1987: "I gave the money to Vashkov—R300,000, in two leather cases. Vashkov told me he 'had to sort things out with someone from the business world' and that he would give me the money back soon. But 2 months later Vashkov suddenly died, and he did not give me back the money." The Vashkov in question was chief of the USSR MVD trade department at the time.

I have described just one element in the voluminous file, one of the traits that characterize Churbanov. But it is necessary to go beyond the bounds that confine the court's examination of the case. This case is only the leftovers from a feast whose hangover led to the exposure of the mafia that had emerged in Uzbekistan. It seems to me that it is rather unjust to the republic and its people that when the words "corruption" and "mafia" are mentioned, the adjective "cotton" immediately crops up, with the name of the republic behind the name of its useful crop. But what can be done about that? The bitter cup of truth must be drained to the dregs. Because the facts, as the saying goes, speak for themselves, although I am convinced that those who suffered most were the Uzbek people, who toiled honestly in the cotton fields....

On 27 April 1983 the Uzbek SSR KGB instituted proceedings with regard to the apprehension red-handed (for bribery) of A. Muzaffarov, chief of the Bukhara Oblispolkom Internal Affairs Administration Department for Combating Embezzlement of Socialist Property. The case went to the USSR Prosecutor's Office, and a tangle of actions that was to give the Soviet public a real shock began to be unraveled. Criminal proceedings were taken against the chairman of the republic council of ministers, secretaries of the Central Committee, obkoms, and raykoms, soviet staffers, and employees of law enforcement organs. Including the present defendants.

In the course of the investigation R42 million was confiscated; 6 million from one person, 6 million from another, 4.5 million from a third, 2 million from some people, and "various trivial sums," reckoned in tens and hundreds of thousands, from many people. Naturally, none of this was earned by honest labor; all of it was stolen from you and me. Bribes "for nothing" flourished, although this "nothing" took the form of official patronage, appointments, career moves, and promotions, as well as connivance and protection. People benefited from entertainment and gifts, taxation of subordinates, allocation of apartments, cars, and other things in short supply, places in VUZ's, and so forth. These are not "individual, atypical cases." This is the demoralization and degeneration of the official hierarchy, which unfortunately infected the republican party apparatus.

But where did all this come from? Where did the million-ruble bribes come from? This is where we can detect an entire mechanism demoralizing the state and society. The desire to fulfill the cotton plan, which was patently unrealistic, at all costs, led to exaggerated reporting. The 4.5 million tonnes of cotton, worth R6 billion, which was supposedly handed over to the state, simply did not exist. So this means that the state thinks it owns not paper currency, but a real asset in the form of 4.5 million tonnes of "white gold," when in fact it has no such thing? Thus the self-seeking interest of an individual bribe-taker obsessed with the desire to grow rich personally and have something to give his boss or his patron in higher echelons saps the material, financial, and every other kind of might of the state. The conclusion is logical: "In the Uzbek SSR in the seventies and early eighties there took root a pernicious system of deception of the state, corruption, and mutual protection, which affected the republic's administrative, soviet, and party organs."

The court investigation of the Churbanov case did not tackle economic problems; it had no right to go beyond the bounds of the charges filed. But it will do no harm if you and I, reader, think about a wider range of problems, so as to understand that the actions imputed to the defendants are no exotic crimes. They are blows against you and me, against our living standard, and they are one of the reasons we are still waiting in lines, having difficulty in obtaining basic items, while many people simply cannot make ends meet.

But all the same, let us come closer to the case.... So, Churbanov. Here is the evidence of the former chairman of the Council of Ministers—just think of it, the head of government of a sovereign republic—Khudayberdyyev:

"Rashidov and I met Churbanov at the airport like an important person, a very senior official.... In short, like a head of state, with full honors. His appearance at a Central Committee conference was greeted with applause, and everyone stood. I myself wanted to become more closely acquainted with him, so as to create a good impression.... In a case like that it would not be impressive to go in for trivialities. So I decided that 50,000 was a very appropriate sum. I passed it to Churbanov in his hotel room, along with a R100 coffee service."

Solely to create a good impression? Let us not be naive. The head of government knew very well to whom, and for what purpose, one gives such a sum on a first meeting.

Yesin, former first secretary of Navoi Obkom, who presented Churbanov with a gold silk robe and an embroidered cap, along with 30,000, is more frank: "Churbanov was from Brezhnev's family, so it was important to create a good impression. The oblast had only just been formed—many questions had to be settled. Rashidov personally attached great importance to the impressions the son-in-law would take away with him...."

And the son-in-law took it graciously. "These spongers of Rashidov's wanted to win me over, and enlist my father-in-law's favor through me." That worried the young general who was rapidly climbing the official ladder: "I felt embarrassed, I should have told these toadies to go to hell and chucked the money back in their faces.... I would only have had to do it once...." Oh, what a noble impulse! But... "I could not find the civic courage to oppose flattery and bribery." For some reason, Yuriy Mikhaylovich even thinks he "could not overcome his feelings as a civilized man" (?).

In court, in reply to the question that always follows the reading of the indictment, "Do you plead guilty?", Churbanov said that he pleads guilty of abuses, but denies bribery and does not consider that he took bribes....

A brief word about the evidence of those who acknowledged their guilt during the investigation and did not change their stance in court.

Begelman described confidently and in detail how he took from his subordinates and gave to his boss. "I had no choice, that was the situation in the republic and in our organs. Rashidov had imposed his own cult, nepotism, bribery, toadying. I took payments mainly from State Automobile Inspectorate inspectors. I paid out to obtain my next title and to be promoted. That was the system, and I went along with it."

Sabirov admitted that he gave bribes to his bosses: "Well, they had guests from Moscow every day; think about it: They had to feed them, give them drinks, give them souvenirs." "Where did you get the money?" "I gave my own money." "Your wage was R500, if you gave your own money, then it works out like this: 380 for bribes, 120 to live on. Is that right?" "I have two working sons—we could feed ourselves." "So?" "The rayon internal affairs department sometimes gave me money too, they knew I was going to Tashkent, I had to take 1,000 for the minister."

Nearly all the defendants said that much of their evidence was forced out of them in the preliminary investigation. As Churbanov stated, the investigators "applied psychological pressure." No one, however, has produced any concrete evidence to confirm that unlawful methods of investigation were used.

Churbanov: Why did I confess during investigation, but am now denying it? When they began to call me as a witness, I realized they were collecting evidence against me too. But I never imagined for a moment that I, a colonel

general, would be arrested. And suddenly I was arrested. I was shaken. Under stress. I had to collect myself, but then there was an interrogation, another, a third. I was not allowed to collect my thoughts.

Prosecutor: What about your letter to the general prosecutor? You yourself named the people you took money from.

Churbanov: I wrote to the investigator's dictation. Yes, I gave 123 names. I incriminated people under pressure from the investigators. They demanded: Hand over the million. But there was no million.

Prosecutor: But where is the money that you now admit to having received?

Churbanov: I will not answer that question.

Sitting in the courtroom and listening to the evidence, and, before that, watching the videotapes of the interrogations and the confrontations, I kept thinking about this. Did Churbanov and his accomplices confess to their crime, or were they forced to do so? I am not going to express an opinion, and indeed I have no right to. But I will describe my impressions.

Yes, being arrested would stun anyone, not only a colonel general. And cross-examination is no laughing matter. But when the prosecutor observed that there was time to collect yourself and to write down, during the investigation, that you had given wrong evidence, the defendant was unable to reply. "The deputy general prosecutor talked with you, Churbanov, before the end of the investigation; why did you not tell him what you are saying now?" "You are a prosecutor, you are on the other side of the barricades." "You demanded another investigator—it was granted, but even then you did not change your evidence." "I was already broken."

In short, the court examination, in part, followed the path of clarifying what had taken place in the preliminary investigation. True, I personally found the defendants' accusations against a whole group of investigators unconvincing. But it is hard to refute their words. This indicates yet again how important it is for an attorney to take part in the preliminary investigation. Yes, first and foremost in order to give legal assistance to the suspect. Second, to avoid the clashes just described.

Umarov, former Uzbekistan Communist Party Central Committee administrator of affairs, was questioned in court as a witness. He was arrested, and he gave evidence for the prosecution. He was released. He wrote a letter to A.A. Gromyko claiming that his confessions had been forced out of him. He was arrested again, and he promptly returned to his former evidence. Some of the time he was lying. When? It was virtually impossible for the court to establish that: He was not beaten; he was not worn down by hunger or sleeplessness. If the preliminary investigation had taken the form of legal, adversarial proceedings with the participation of an attorney, this problem would not have arisen.

When Churbanov's turn came to give his evidence, he put forward what he called his "concept of his actions." Yes, he took money, but it was not bribes. He did not receive a kopek from militia officials; there may have been "gifts of fruit," but money—never! Begelman is slandering me, and so are the others who have confessed in court.

From party and soviet workers—yes, that happened. For instance, the Uzbekistan Communist Party Central Committee administration of affairs handed over a briefcase, saying: "From Comrade Rashidov." There was dinner and an outing with Khudayberdyyev. "He gave me some kind of package, as a souvenir, there was 50,000 in it. But he did not ask me for anything, and I did nothing; what kind of a bribe is that?... Or obkom First Secretary Yesin in Navoi. We saw the city, had dinner; they gave me a robe and embroidered cap to wear, later they rolled them up, and in the hotel I found 30,000 in the pocket of the robe. Why did I, a well-off person, take it? That is hard to explain. People were really pursuing me—so as to give me things. I did not want to offend people or go against tradition. All this horrifies me now, I cannot explain even to myself why I did not chuck the money back in the faces of these toadies. I am to blame for that."

After setting forth this "concept," which differs drastically from his evidence during the investigation, Churbanov said:

"That is all that happened, and how it happened. I will not say anything more; I refuse to answer any questions."

"That is your right," the chairman said.

"But perhaps you will explain to the court all the same," the prosecutor asked, "why you have now started giving entirely different evidence. In the course of the investigation, I repeat, you could have said that you had slandered innocent people, you named 130 people, including some who were entirely unknown to the investigators. Some of whom, incidentally, are sitting next to you. Explain that."

To these words, Churbanov's attorney, A. Makarov, stated:

"My client refuses to reply. That is his right. But the comrade prosecutor..."

The chairman confirmed: Yes, it is his right.

Churbanov's attorney applied for the case to be sent for further investigation. The prosecution felt there was no need for that.... The state prosecutor felt that the defendant Yakhyayev was asking impermissible questions and hampering the investigation of the case. His attorney challenged the prosecution. The court did not grant that application, but said that the defendant has rights which must not be violated. After this "debate" the chairman asked for tact to be exercised, and warned the participants in the trial in strong terms.

That was the complex situation in which the interrogation of the defendants took place. The evidence of the witnesses—about 200 people—varied, naturally. Much time had elapsed since the commission of the crimes, people had forgotten some things, and people were very eager to forget some things. Out of all this colorful mosaic the military collegium had to pick out the "grains of truth" that could alone form the basis of the verdict.

Here we need to return to perhaps the most complex question of this trial: defining the actions which the indictment described as bribes and which the defendants—and first and foremost Churbanov, of course—and the defense portrayed as anything you like except bribes.

The law (Article 173 of the RSFSR Criminal Code) provides a fairly precise but, as experience shows, limited definition of the crime known as bribe-taking: "The commission or noncommission of an act in the interests of the giver of the bribe..." In the context of the exposure of mafia clans and corrupt groups including high-ranking officials, the system of justice has also come up against "bribes for nothing." Or, in any event, instances when the handing over of large sums to a high official has been established but it has been difficult to show a causal connection with any specific action ("commission") or inaction ("noncommission").

In an established bureaucratic system which embraces every level of administration from top to bottom, no specific "action" is actually necessary. When briefing a high-level official all you have to do is fail to mention certain deficiencies in a region or, by contrast, mention in passing that not everything is perfect in a certain oblast. What specifically? Nothing at all, mere trifles, "nothing worthy of attention." But the word has been spoken. Or not spoken. A shadow cast. Or dispelled. Can this be a mere trifle for a thief with high rank, a deceiver of the state? No way. This is something worth paying for. And generously. And pay they did.

Now imagine that a beloved son-in-law is dining with not just a high-level official but "the top man" and, when an oblast leader is mentioned, he says something or even just frowns or breaks into a smile. Nobody, of course, knows what went on over dinners or luncheons—the court did not investigate that. The following fact did occur, however. When visiting an oblast center Churbanov went into a store and moaned about the poor state of trade and the low standard of everything in the city in general. But after a dinner and a gift of R30,000 there was no more moaning. How can you avoid giving a bribe if it produces "results"? This, I would venture to say, is sophisticated extortion.

Evidently some lawyers will say that this in itself is not proof and will cite the provisions of the criminal code. I do not intend to argue with them. I do not wish to confine myself to references to the sentence imposed by the military collegium, although the sentence provides an unequivocal answer to this question. But too many facts linked with the activity of corrupt mafia gangs testify that these "nothings" are handed out with largesse and that fabulous fortunes are obtained in return for these contributions. The provisions of the criminal law do indeed need clarification and interpretation: This would make it possible to conduct an organized struggle against organized crime.

Almost all the defendants and many of the witnesses were asked: "Were you given a bribe, and what for?" or "Did you give a bribe, and what for?" And all those who confessed found it difficult to say "what for." "That was how the system worked"; "everyone did it"; "if I hadn't, I'd have lost my job." And that is the truth, it was the fulcrum of the system created by the Rashidov setup in Uzbekistan. And the NCO with general's stripes on his pants played the role of one of the leading axes. By the very act of taking inducements worth thousands from the republic's party and state apparatus leaders, who were a law unto themselves, he induced degeneration and corruption, encouraged theft and deception, and instilled confidence that any illegality would go unpunished.

A great deal of what has been said here was heard in the speech by state prosecutor A.V. Sboyev and the speeches by the defense. Readers are hardly going to be satisfied with fragments, but there is no possibility of citing in great detail what was said. Apart from the inevitable question—was the charge proven or not proven?—the tussle between the parties concerned the problem we have already identified: inducement or bribe? The verdict, which is the law, gave an answer to this in this case.

I have no doubt that the verdict will give rise to stormy debate. The indictment accused Churbanov of taking R650,000; the prosecutor dropped about half this sum, and the court deemed proven "only" R90,000. Kakhramanov has been vindicated. Yakhyayev has been released from custody. All this is quite legitimate from the legal viewpoint: If guilt is not proved, there is no guilt. But there is something that is unusual. And this, in my view, is the biggest sensation: In this verdict justice asserted its principles, disregarding any other factors—no matter what anyone may have thought or written about Churbanov and the other defendants, their criminal guilt had to be proved with all rigorousness. My view is that the court acted in a principled and courageous manner in remaining true to the law rather than to "considerations" concerning the dangerousness of unconfirmed actions....

Time and again at the trial people returned to Churbanov's personality. In one way or another he turned out to be not only the central figure in the court but also the person "everyone was talking about."

Indeed, his was a fantastic career. Churbanov married Galina Brezhneva in April 1971, and the ascent up the ladder of rank and position began immediately: Awarded the rank of lieutenant colonel ahead of schedule, before you know it he was a general: major general, lieutenant general, colonel general. Then chief of the Political Department, deputy minister, and first deputy minister of internal affairs. Candidate member of the CPSU Central Committee and RSFSR Supreme Soviet deputy. Combat Orders of the Red Banner and the Red Star in peacetime, a state prize—for organizing the Olympic games... Just the time to start writing his memoirs...

Instead, however, he had to listen to his sentence.... Flying high professionally and, simultaneously, personal degradation. Such things happen, unfortunately, and not so rarely. With Churbanov, however, it was all so exaggeratedly graphic—as if a poisonous vegetable of unprecedented proportions had grown out of radiation-contaminated soil....

Yeltsin Interviewed on Economy, Social Justice

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[Interview with Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, first deputy chairman of the USSR Gosstroy and USSR minister, by economic observer Pavel Voshchanov: "Let Us Not Forget Man"; date, place not given; first paragraph is editorial introduction]

[Text] Your own stance, an original way of thinking, an unusual view of the urgent problems of life... You can agree or disagree with people like that, you can accept them or reject them. But one thing is impossible—you cannot be indifferent to their stance and convictions. The name of one such person is Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, first deputy chairman of the USSR Gosstroy and a USSR minister. On the eve of the New Year, our economic observer Pavel Voshchanov met with him.

[Voshchanov] Boris Nikolayevich, during the year now ending KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA has received many letters in which the same request crops up: Please tell us what Yeltsin thinks about this. Of course, we will not be able to discuss all the issues, and indeed a newspaper page is limited in size. What if we confine our discussion to questions of the economy and social justice?

[Yeltsin] Agreed. The link between them is itself very important to me. After all, it is no secret that for many years people tried to ignore that link. They shrugged it off. Slogans and actual deeds wree not infrequently "on opposite sides of the barricades." The peasant, for instance, was called upon to increase agricultural productivity, but at the same time he was deprived of the opportunity to sell surpluses on the market, his land and livestock were taken away from him, and he was driven away from familiar places to the remotest corners of the country. And the worker? He too was "spurred on" to labor feats, but at the same time wage rates were cut, leaving wages permanently at a low level. People were constantly told that in our humane country everything is done exclusively for their benefit. But what did they see in practice? Waiting lines of many years for any kind of housing. Empty counters. Extortion, corruption, and money-grubbing. The self-satisfied flourishing of bureaucracy. And the result? People stopped listening to the slogans and lost enthusiasm for labor feats. It all began to seem deceitful and economically unjustified. It is no accident that when the idea of restructuring was born, many people shrugged it aside through habit. That is a fact. Only after 3 years did people begin to understand that it is not a question of supporting a new leader. It is all considerably more profound. It is a matter of restructuring man himself, faced as he is today with a difficult choice. He has a chance to win the battle for the dignity that was lost some time ago, for everything we call social justice.

[Voshchanov] It is no secret that many economic decisions are made without taking into account people's opinions and interests. They are drafted, as a rule, in secret, in the quiet of ministerial offices. Then the public wastes considerable efforts in trying to revoke them. What form should social control of the adoption of the most important economic decisions take, in your view?

[Yeltsin] Recently we have talked a great deal about referendums. But we have yet to use even once this instrument for the expression of the people's will! The bureaucracy has invented a very curious substitute for it—"nationwide discussion." There is nothing wrong with such discussion in itself. But the technique prompts objections. How does it work? Tens, hundreds of thousands of proposals are conveyed from below to the relevant institutions that are preparing the document. What happens to them there? Who discusses them, and in what way? Why are some accepted, while others are rejected? Today these questions remain a mystery to us. But it should be totally clear. Otherwise strange things can happen: There are thousands of proposals, but only dozens of amendments are made. Consulting with the people means not only telling them what it is proposed to do and how. It also means listening to them and acting in accordance with their wishes. But at the moment some of our apparatchiks seem to look at the problem like this: "Let them amuse themselves, we will have our way all the same!" But the people should have their way. The majority of the people. The voters should therefore be given the right to demand, through their deputies, the holding of referendums on any issues that are causing them concern. And another observation: In drafting economic programs, we should get away from those unfortunate averages. Too many decisions are made on the basis of the "statistically average" citizen. I think that in order to represent the full gravity of a particular decision and assess all its consequences, in economic policy we consider most important the poorly off person, he who makes the minimum wage or is on pension. I am sure many decisions would look completely different then.

[Voshchanov] In their letters readers often express concern: How realistic is the task of providing every Soviet family with an individual apartment by the year 2000? After all, a similar task was set before, in 1965. Then it was suggested that every family would have a well-appointed apartment by 1980. Are we repeating the old mistake, are we setting a task that is impossible in the first place? How would you, as the minister responsible for the development of the construction sector, answer that question?

[Yeltsin] First of all, I will not deny the difficulty of resolving this task. That is the most important thing. As for people's concern, unfortunately it is true that we often proclaim a slogan, and only later begin to calculate and think how to put it into practice. In this way we ourselves sow distrust in many plans and initiatives. Did we assess the potential on this occasion? Yes. Tasks were defined for each 5-year plan: It was proposed to commission 700 million square meters of housing during this one, and 800 million in the next. At first it looked as if that would be enough. But when people began to do more thorough calculations, with the help of demographers, sociologists, and economists, then it emerged, to the construction workers' horror, that in order to resolve the task it is necessary to commission in the 13th 5-Year Plan not 700 million, but 1 billion square meters of housing. As you see, the task has grown more difficult. Especially since as of today we do not even have a base for construction on that scale. We must create a base. But that is not easy to do. Judge for yourself, when the construction boom started in Khrushchev's day, it took 15 years to create the capacities for house-building enterprises to the tune of 60 million square meters. And today we have to create 2.5 times that figure in a maximum of 4 years. Difficult? Incredibly. But there is no other way. We are now beginning to speed up the development of this work. We are establishing precisely what reserves we have today. We propose the construction of several hundred additional plants. In a word, colossal efforts are needed. But I simply have no right not to believe that the task is realistic. If I did not believe that, I would not work at the Gosstroy for a single day.

[Voshchanov] Many letters addressed to you touch on questions of the benefits and privileges enjoyed by certain categories of our citizens. Why is this particular problem central in many of your speeches?

[Yeltsin] With regard to special rations and other nomenklatura privileges, my position is well known. I have always advocated their total abolition. But I am not in favor of leveling! No way. I am opposed to "hierarchical" benefits. Why? Because this is not in accordance with the economic law of the socialist society, "to each according to his labor." "According to his labor" means wages, not goods and services! Otherwise a system of double privileges emerges in society: On the one hand you have higher wages, and on the other you have more goods for those wages. Is that not economic nonsense? I think material benefits should be identically accessible to everyone. In other words, a minister's ruble should be no different from a cleaner's ruble. That is of fundamental importance.

It cannot be denied that today our ruble is rather devalued. Alas, there are not enough goods to back it up. So can it be fair for some people to obtain full value for their money, and thus for their labor, while others do not? Today we are trying to lure our young people to the far north. How? With high wages. Yet they cannot fully "convert into goods" their honestly earned "fast" rubles. There is only one possibility: to keep them "under the mattress." Yet someone who has a special ration, or, as they call it today, a special order, receives full value for his labor. That, it seems to me, is the economic essence of social injustice.

[Voshchanov] At the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference you proposed that efforts be concentrated on the development of three spheres of the economy: trade and public catering, consumer goods production, and the service sphere. But some economists think this would inevitably lead to a decline in the pace of the country's economic development. We may gain today, they say, but we will lose tomorrow....

[Yeltsin] But what is the point of a fast pace today, if it does not make life any better or easier for people? For whom are we actually investing money in economic development? For future generations? They are supposed to reap all the benefits of our selfless labor. But are we not making a mistake? After all, if the economy turns away from people, then sooner or later people turn away from the economy. They have already done so; you cannot fail to notice it. And if we are talking about future generations, where will they come from, healthy and happy, if their parents are constantly living in a state of debilitating shortages?

I think there is a political aspect to this problem too. We must ensure that people feel immediately what restructuring really has to offer them. So that everyone can say: "I have begun to live better!"

[Voshchanov] But it is no secret that the social sphere of our economy is in an extremely neglected state today. That means considerable resources are needed. Where are they to come from?

[Yeltsin] I think it is quite possible to slightly cut some of our programs in other areas. For instance, to postpone for a time the fulfillment of the most costly space programs. Or to cut some things in the defense sphere. And the majority of production sectors should be looked at from precisely this standpoint. In short, I am in favor of tilting the economy sharply in the direction of people. What results that could yield! All the costs would be more than recouped! We should realize today that unless people feel the real benefits of restructuring, it will not work. It will remain only a slogan or, as Lenin said, "hollow bureaucratic rattle."

[Voshchanov] To conclude our conversation: What would you like to wish the newspaper and its readers?

[Yeltsin] That they get rid of indifference. Get rid of the fear that still drives us to this day. Get rid of the innate fear of fighting for your convictions. Do not lose faith in restructuring, despite all the difficulties we encounter in putting it into practice. Without that faith, without a staunch, daily struggle for social justice, we could once again find ourselves hostages to bureaucracy.

Two Killed in Fertilizer Plant Explosion

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[V. Anikeyev report: "Explosion Near Yasnaya Polyana"]

[Text] The incident occurred just before the New Year at the "Azot" production association in Shchekino, which is not far from the L. Tolstoy estate in Tula Oblast. An explosion occurred late at night in the cyclohexane shop. Two people died as a result of the accident. A commission from the USSR Ministry of Mineral Fertilizer Production is working at the scene. It is headed by Deputy Minister G. Yermakov.

Process of Rebuilding in Armenia Reported

Looters 'Severely Punished'

LD0201215388 Moscow TASS in English 2146 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Moscow January 3 TASS—The collegium for criminal cases of the Armenian Supreme Court has tried cases of looting in quake-stricken areas and has severely punished the criminals, the newspaper, SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA reported on Tuesday.

The sincere impulse to immediately come to the aid of the people affected by the devastating earthquake swept the whole of the country, the newspaper wrote. Other countries did not remain indifferent to the tragedy either. However, on those days some dishonest people decided to profit from people's grief. Thus, on the first day after the earthquake V. Manukyan, 36, a Yerevan driver, stole from a Leninkan storehouse 1,633 roubles worth of foodstuffs. He was sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment.

A disgusting crime was committed by A. Babayan, 22, from the city of Abovyan, who did not work anywhere. He went to Spitak, then to Kirovakan, where he introduced himself as a physician from the first-aid medical service and joined rescue teams in pulling the dead and wounded from under the debris and transporting them to hospitals. When doing all that, he robbed them of gold jewelry and other valuable things. Babayan was sentenced to five years of imprisonment.

R. Airapetyan, 20, a worker, will serve a three-year prison term. Staying in Leninakan where he went allegedly for helping quake victims, the criminal stole ten blankets from a truck carrying relief cargoes.

The sentences were met with approval by Armenian people.

Yazov Remarks on Army Role

LD3012185288 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1215 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] Moscow, 30 Dec (TASS)—The first, most crucial and dramatic stage in eliminating the consequences of the earthquake in Armenia has come to an end. The CPSU Central Committee Politburo session on 28 December noted that Soviet servicemen who assumed the main burden of the initial rescue work made a huge contribution to overcoming the aftermath of the disaster. A TASS correspondent met with Army General Dmitriy Yazov, member of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo Commission, candidate member of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo and USSR defense minister, and asked him the following questions:

[Correspondent] How do you rate the promptness and efficiency of the servicemen's efforts and the scale of their assistance in eliminating the aftermath of the earthquake in Armenia in the first stage?

[Yazov] I should like first of all to stress that all the fraternal republics and all Soviet people responded to the disaster which hit the Armenian SSR. The active internationalism of Soviet people was a determining factor in confronting the disaster. It was met staunchly and courageously by the Armenian people themselves who showed dignity and stamina in their hour of trial.

M.S. Gorbachev's address to the Armenian people on the day of the earthquake, his arrival right in the disaster area, and the adoption there of the decision to provide the necessary comprehensive emergency aid were of enormous significance.

A CPSU Central Committee Politburo commission led by N.I. Ryzhkov has been working at full complement for approximately 2 weeks right in the earthquake area.

The personnel of the units and subunits that were in the disaster area bravely met the blow from the elements. Servicemen were involved in the rescue work from the first moments, including servicemen from those garrisons which themselves suffered the destructive effect of the earthquake and where there were human losses. Some 332 servicemen, employees of the Soviet Army and members of their families perished.

Here are some examples of courage and loyalty to duty. The wife and two children of Major A. Surtayev, a political worker, died in the first minutes of the earthquake. But the officer did not break rank and took part with everyone else in rescuing people.

The daughter of Major of Medical Service A. Baryshev, chief of a hospital department of anaesthesiology and resuscitation, ended up beneath the rubble. Though knowing that she had perished, the officer did not abandon his military post and for 1 and ½ days stayed at his operating table. May our common sympathy and respect for the exploit performed by these people help them to overcome their grief. Very many examples could be given.

More than 23,000 people have been brought in from the Defense Ministry to eliminate the consequences of the natural disaster: they have at their disposal more than 3,000 pieces of equipment of different kinds.

Units of the internal troops and militia subunits, who number approxiamately 5,500 in the areas of the earthquake, are operating in close contact with men of the Soviet Army.

Assault troops of the reqiment commanded by Lieutenant Colonel V. Medvedev were among the first to begin rescue work. They worked round-the-clock without sleep or rest and saved more than 1,000 lives. An example of selfless action here, as in other units, was given by Communists.

Representatives of various categories of the armed services and their branches, and virtually all the services of the rear, are taking part in the relief effort. The soldiers have done much to ease the sufferings and living conditions of the population.

Military medical personnel are doing much work. Eight medical service units and establishments, including two hospitals, have been deployed. Medical assistance has been given to more than 6,000 people.

Eighty-seven feeding stations were organized in the disaster zone, and these allowed 37,000 people to receive 2 meals a day free of charge. More than 10 tonnes of bread were baked daily at mechanized field bakeries. Nor was the people's need for spiritual nourishment neglected: it was arranged for the people to be informed of the reports made by the CPSU Central Committee Politburo Commission and of other matters through the Army's sound broadcasting stations.

More than 27,000 tents have been erected for the people; 4 bath and laundry trains and a laundry detachment are operating, as are 32 field bath-houses. In the very first days pipelines stretching a total of 35.5 km were assembled by the forces of pipe-laying subunits in order to supply the population with water.

Airmen are making a great contribution to the general effort. In particular, more than 1,100 flights have been mounted by military transport aviation; approximately 400 cranes, 100 excavators, and quantities of other equipment and various cargoes have been expeditiously delivered to the disaster area.

It is also necessary to note the courage and mastery of the sappers who are blowing up the ruins and fulfilling other very complicated tasks, with risk to their lives. Eleven semi-ruined buildings which presented the greatest danger have already been blown up.

A significant volume of work has been fulfilled by signals troops personnel and railway troops, including the laying of 8.7 km of track.

In addition to rescue and restoration work Soviet servicemen, together with personnel of the internal troops and militia officials, are fulfilling responsible tasks to maintain public order.

[Correspondent] It was noted at the session of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo that the rescue work phase is now mainly being completed. What tasks have been entrusted to army servicemen in this connection?

[Yazov] The second phase of the elimination of the consequences will, of course, be more prolonged but no less intense. Its ultimate aim is the restoration of the region's social and economic potential.

Of course, the servicemen's functions will change. Today clearing the ruins remains the main task. Preparations for construction will start in the near future, and then the construction itself. Subunits of various arms of the services and military and nonparamilitary civil defense units are participating in clearing the ruins. Military builders are being involved in the job.

Two military construction detachments are working in the earthquake area, and six more are being sent in. A considerable quantity of construction structures, materials, and equipment has already been unloaded, including 14 sets of prefabricated panel barracks, 27 sets of prefabricated metal stores, and more than 100 mobile caravan homes. A group of planners and surveyors has been set up.

Scientific forces from the V.V. Kuybyshev Military Engineering Academy and from a number of scientific research establishments of the Defense Ministry have been brought in to study the consequences of the earthquake, to generalize experience of work in eliminating these, and also to draw up recommendations for the future.

Railway and road and bridge-building units will resolve crucial tasks in restoring and developing the road network and other communications.

[Correspondent] The disaster has brought a fervent response not only from the personnel of the units which have come here to provide direct assistance, but, clearly, from all servicemen in the Soviet Armed Forces?

[Yazov] All servicemen and members of their families have reacted to the misfortune as if it were their own. Money is daily being paid into the relief fund by all military districts, groups of forces, fleets, scientific-research institutes, and military-training establishments, as well as by individual servicemen.

The personnel of the units and subunits of the groups of Soviet forces in Germany alone have contributed R1.7 million to the relief fund. Moscow military district has contributed R333,500. Overall, approximately R12 million has been paid into the fund. Servicemen and members of their families have donated more than 7,000 liters of blood. Warm items, crockery, children's food, toys and books have been collected and dispatched.

Our female combat friends—the wives of officers, warrant officers, and naval warrant officers—deserve the highest praise. In the Transcaucasian military district they have set up action groups which are seeking out divided families and lost children and rendering all kinds of assistance to the sick and injured in military and civilian hospitals. In Yerevan, for example, Yelena Sergeyevna Mukhina, an officer's wife, has organized a duty rota for members of the women's council in the hospitals to which the injured were taken. Their involvement, warmth, and care mean a great deal to the patients, of course.

[Correspondent] What lessons and conclusions do commanders and political bodies need to draw from an analysis of the actions of the servicemen in the first stage in your opinion?

[Yazov] One of the basic lessons is that within the units and subunits combat readiness, that is readiness for battle, as well as readiness for action in various extreme conditions—eliminating the consequences of earthquakes and other natural disasters, and also accidents at industrial enterprises and on transportation—must be maintained at the proper level. This conclusion is also dictated by analysis of the processes of eliminating the accident at the Chernobyl AES and the explosions on the railways in Arzamas and Sverdlovsk where, as is well known, a considerable burden was also placed on the servicemen.

Actions by personnel confirmed once again that this readiness is greater where the process of tuition and education is better organized, where party and political work is more vigorously conducted, and where organization, discipline, and order are better. this applies in full, for example, to the assault troops who demonstrated the best qualities of Soviet servicemen—high political awareness, loyalty to duty, readiness to come to one another's aid, moral staunchness, and strong physical fitness.

A characteristic feature of the Army formations that are in the disaster area, as in fact of other military collectives too, is their multinational composition. Among the servicemen who came to help are the sons of all union republics, representatives of more than 50 nations and ethnic groups. This is vivid confirmation of the unity of the Army and the people, and of the internationalist character of our armed forces.

Nor can there be any argument about the conclusion that there is a need to intensify work on internationalist upbringing and increasing the cohesiveness of military collectives.

This problem must be constantly at the focus of attention of commanders, political bodies, and party and Komsomol organizations.

However, it must also be acknowledged that not all commanders and political staff were on top of the situation at a difficult moment. Some of them were slow to make decisions and were sometimes at a loss. At the initial stage organizational misunderstandings and inadequate coordination and initiative in the actions of the various services had their effect. And although subsequently the position was rectified, the lesson remains: more attention must be paid in day-to-day life to the development of businesslike qualities, efficiency, precision, self-reliance, and responsibility.

Civil defense subunits were not fully prepared to tackle their tasks, even though they are in fact intended for action in an emergency situation. Their inadequate level of technical equipment and the inability of a number of specialists to make effective use of modern mechanisms were brought to light. Some servicemen, drafted in from the reserves, failed to display a readiness for selfless work. There were even individual instances of evasions of assignments in dangerous areas.

Hence the conclusion that there is a need to increase people's education in the spirit of readiness to perform their patriotic military duty.

The matter of improving civil defense and creating within it mobile, well-trained and technically equipped formations, both of troops and nonmilitarized ones, is on the agenda.

It is essential to make the appropriate amendments to the structure and training of the engineering troops and possibly of other types of troops. All this is, of course, directly linked to the implementation of the decisions of the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference ensuring the priority of quality parameters in military construction and compliance with the party's directives on restructuring within the armed forces.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, I should like to proffer words of thanks for the upbringing of the motherland's true patriots to those parents whose soldier sons are worthily fulfilling their military duty in the disaster area and showing loyalty to the heroic traditions.

Politburo Commission Meets

LD3012214788 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1208 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] Yerevan, 30 Dec (TASS)—Without a sharp increase in the handling capacity of Armenia's railways the vast aid being assigned by the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers will not reach the earthquake- stricken areas in time. Discussion of this, one of the key problems, opened the latest meeting of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo Commission 30 December under the chairmanship of Yuriy Batalin, deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers.

A program for the large-scale reconstruction of the railways in Armenia has been drawn up. It has been decided to automate the transportation control system on the busiest section between Tbilisi and Leninakan. This will make it possible to increase its efficiency by 30 percent. Its own marshalling yards will be created in order to secure an increase in the volume of transportation in the republic.

A spokesman of the USSR state agro-industrial committee reported that the situation is gradually returning to normal in rural areas. In Aparan Rayon, for instance, milk production has increased by 10 per cent compared with the same period last year. A meat-processing combine has started to operate in Kirovakan.

In quake-stricken villages there are quite a few houses with insignificant damage. It is necessary to urgently send there a group of specialists who could assess the extent of the damage to the houses and provide a judgement on their suitability for residence.

Many rural inhabitants are expressing a readiness to restore the devastated housing with their own hands. The CPSU Central Committee Politburo Commission has instructed the USSR and republic ministries of trade to quickly open up shops selling building materials in the stricken areas of the countryside and to provide them with all they need.

A considerable improvement has been noted in the work of enterprises of the USSR Ministry of Trade. Thus, for example, in Leninakan there are already 34 grocery shops, 10 greengrocers and nine manufactured goods shops open. In the days just before the New Year the ministry has organized the dispatch of 10,000 presents to children who are disaster victims. Before the New Year 20,000 packs containing a range of foodstuffs will be dispatched to builders working in the devastated areas.

At the same time scathing criticism resounded at the session directed at the republican trading organizations that had not managed to organize the special pre-festival sales of foodstuffs in Yerevan in an adequate manner in the current circumstances. It was stressed that those in charge would bear personal responsibility for all the blunders. In this connection, it was noted that the style of work of a number of leaders is restricted solely to giving orders. They are not actually in control of the situation, they are not exercising control on the spot, and this is engendering contradictions and unfounded rumors about the alleged unfair distribution of the aid arriving for Armenia. It was proposed at the session of the commission that on 2 January the heads of the ministries and departments should report back to the people on where and how the numerous loads of aid are being distributed. Their report will be broadcast on television.

Every day the situation in the disaster areas is getting better. People can see the real changes and are aware of the increasingly great care for them. The evacuation of the victims from the disaster zone is continuing. By 1 January 1989, there will have been 110,000 people evacuated, including 70,000 beyond the bounds of the republic; 65,000 of these have gone to the country's resorts.

Taking part in the session of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo Commission was Suren Arutyunyan, first secretary of the Armenian Communist Party Central Committee.

Commission Meets 2 Jan

LD0201132489 Moscow TASS in English 1314 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Yerevan January 2 TASS—The number of evacuees from Armenian quake-hit areas has reached 109,696 and 70,310 of them have been taken out of this Transcaucasian republic.

These figures were cited at another meeting of the Politburo commission overseeing relief operations in Armenia, which was chaired on Monday by Deputy Prime Minister Yuriy Batalin.

It was also noted that the sanitary and epidemiological situation in affected areas is satisfactory.

Master plans for 111 populated localities in the zone will have been drawn up by January 20 and all new structures will be built to withstand tremors as strong as force 9.

The Armenian Council of Ministers has already endorsed draft master plans for the cities of Kirovakan, Leninakan and Spitak. All the drafts, the meeting was told, will be submitted for public discussion.

Work is continuing in stricken areas to restore gas and water supply and sewage lines and roads. Thirty-one of the 70 local factories have restarted work. One of the prime tasks at this stage in the relief effort should be to help people from affected areas restart active working lives.

A representative of the Armenian Health Ministry reported that the quake destroyed 250 medical centres completely and left another 300-odd unfit for use. Damage totals more than 500 million roubles.

Medical personnel organised efficient medical assistance for quake victims from the very first days after the tragedy. The tremors adversely affected the mental state of survivors. So Armenia's psychiatric service was quickly readjusted to meet related needs and a system was developed for aiding and evacuating patients. A mental rehabilitation centre was established in Yerevan.

A representative of the USSR Foreign Ministry briefed the commission on international cooperation in rebuilding destroyed social and consumer service facilities and factories in Armenia on a commercial basis. Joint projects are in the works, for example, with a number of West German, Japanese, Italian and French firms. A total of 248 specialists from 14 countries are now working in six districts in the quake zone.

The Armenia Council of Ministers was criticised for inadequate control over the distribution of arriving relief. Lack of public openness about the distribution of food and other aid, the meeting was told, frequently gives rise to gossip and fabrications.

Death Toll Update

LD0301094689 Moscow TASS in English 0941 GMT 3 Jan 89

[Text] Yerevan January 3 TASS—The last survivor was pulled from under the rubble by rescuers in the city of Spitak ten days ago, Norik Muradyan, director of the Spitak headquarters for the elimination of the effects of the devastating earthquake which had occurred in Armenia on December 7, last year, told a TASS correspondent in a telephone interview.

Western press reports to the effect that 17 survivors were found in Spitak on the 24th day after the earthquake are, unfortunately, unfounded, he said.

Rescue operations in Spitak and other towns hit by the earthquake are going on. According to a report of the Armenian Council of Ministers, 28 dead bodies had been extracted since December 29.

As of today the number of dead bodies found has totalled 24,888.

Questions Answered Via Telebridge

LD3112204988 Moscow Television Service in Russian 1500 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Excerpt] [Announcer] A television bridge has linked the press center of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow with the television center in Yerevan. Gathered in Moscow were Soviet and foreign journalists; in the television studio in the Armenian capital were leaders of the republic's ministries, departments, and public organizations. As a preliminary to the meeting, Yuriy Petrovich Chaplygin, deputy head of the Information Department of the USSR Council of Ministers, said among other things:

[Begin recording] [Chaplygin] You are aware that a detailed decision was adopted by the Politburo on rendering assistance to the disaster area. Assessments have been given of the work of the Politburo commission; assessments have been given of the state of affairs in the earthquake regions; and a new state commission, an interdepartmental commission, has been formed on urban construction. Work is effectively moving into the next stage, the second stage, the restoration stage. A few words about the total damage. According to the latest figures this is put at R8.5 million; 514,000 people have been made homeless. A decision has been made to build houses, living accommodation, with a total space of 4 million square metres in the towns, and 1.6 million square meters in the countryside; 130 industrial enterprises are either going to be restored, or their restoration has already begun. Fifty-eight destroyed villages are to be restored. The priority area in the repair work has been given over to the social sphere—the building of new schools, hospitals, polyclinics, and social and municipal services facilities. The clearing of the destroyed towns and villages is now expanding rapidly. [video shows Chaplygin addressing journalists in Moscow press center]

[Gerasimov] We can now receive Yerevan: Here is Suren Mavisakalyan.

[Mavisakalyan] Hello. In our audience are leaders of the republic and people who have been engaged directly in problems brought about by the earthquake. They are all ready to reply to your questions. Thank you, Moscow.

[Gerasimov] Perhaps you could introduce the comrades who have come to your studio so that our correspondents know to whom they might perhaps address specific questions.

[Mavisakalyan] With pleasure, I'll do so now. Yuriy Yervandovich Khodzhamiryan, deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Armenian SSR; Varkes (Vortpogratovich) Artsryni, deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Armenian SSR and chairman of the republic's State Construction Committee; Grachya Genrikovich Akopyan, first secretary of the LKSM of Armenia; (Zefira Davidovna Minasyan), secretary of the Trade Union Council of Armenia; (Marat Bagratovich Eziryan), first deputy chairman of the State Planning Committee of the Armenian SSR; Ursula (Geyvandovna) Pogosyan, deputy minister of health of the Armenian SSR; Usik Surenovich Arutyunyan, minister of internal affairs of the Armenian SSR; Edgar Sergeyevich Oganesyan, people's artist of the USSR, rector of the Yerevan State Conservatoire and chairman of the Children's Foundation of Armenia; Bishop (Partiyev) of Echmiadzin; Sergey (Valashakovich) Grigoryan, corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR and director of the Institute of Geology of the republic; (Aleksey Dmitriyevich Tuyulyandin), first deputy chairman of the Soviet Red Cross; Anatoliy Ashotovich Mkrtchyan, minister of foreign affairs of the Armenian SSR; (Nor Grigoryevich Muradyan), first secretary of the Spitak Raykom of the Communist Party of Armenia; and Dzhanik Artashesovich Dzhanoyan, minister of finance of the republic. [video: Mavisakalyan introducing participants in Yerevan]

[Gerasimov] Thank you. Suren Mavisakalyan is chief editor of popular science and educational programs of Armenian television, and he is presenting there now. Thank you. Let's go to the questions.

[Pavlov] Pavlov, Novosti press agency. We have been given the figure of more than R8.5 million for the total damage. Could you say what part of this damage will be borne by the republic of Armenia itself?

[Eziryan] The share of our republic, compared with the union repubics, will be fairly small, you understand; the lion's share—I repeat once again—will be implemented by the union ministries and departments. The large volume of capital investment which has been envisaged by the decisions will therefore be carried out with centralized capital investments. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified questioner, in English with superimposed Russian translation] A question from ABC News. Could you say whether you see any long-term functions for the foreign medical staff in Armenia?

[Mkrtchyan] About 3,000 foreigners came to our country. Of these, 2,400 were specialists, meaning rescue specialists, doctors, and so on. At the present time, that is at today's date, we have about 400 to 450 foreigners, specialists, who are at work. As far as the medical workers are concerned I think a reply will be given...

[Pogosyan, interrupting] The medical workers of the republic joined in this work from the very beginning, and afterwards help came in quickly from foreign countries and states. I have to say that we speak of them with much gratitude—they gave us effective help. Some of them are continuing to work, but in the main they are going home; they are going and other countries are offering help, and we accept that help with pleasure. No doubt now there are about 100 to 150 people who are continuing to work in our country.

[Khodzhamiryan] We have discussed this question with the minister and her colleagues and deputies and we believe that what we need now is not assistance in the form of medicines—of which we now have supplies, thanks to the assistance, as our minister has said—but now, no doubt, we need to think about the equipment. Medical equipment, instruments and technology will be needed for rehabilitation, and will be needed in the future, as was said, for social provision, so to speak, and for work with sick people. It is necessary to restore hospitals and clinics, and equip them with modern technology. We will certainly need that help, and we believe that the help which is being given to our republic in the form of money, including that which is coming from abroad—we believe that in the main this will be directed for the acquisition of medical equipment, and the equipping of those hospitals, polyclinics, and treatment establishments which were hit by the earthquake.

[Minasyan] The WFTU has appealed to all its trade union organizations for help in this matter, the construction of health protection establishments in the disaster zone and of social facilities. Building teams are being formed. The AUCCTU is working in this together with the world trade union organization, and these will come here with their equipment to build these facilities. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified questioner, in English with superimposed Russian translation] I would like to ask the first secretary of the Spitak City Committee about the rebuilding of Spitak in another place. Are there any objections to those plans?

[Muradyan] We agree that they should begin rebuilding the town in another place: Our people are in agreement with this.

[Unidentified questioner, in Russian] How can one explain the fact that Comrade Arutyunyan—the No 1 leader in Armenia—was not included in the Politburo commission from the very beginning? A dispatch from Baku appeared in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA under the title: "Flights of Misfortune and Duty," and my understanding of it was that an aircraft which was then flying from Sumgait, crashed at Yerevan, and that there was some hint of sabotage. What is your attitude to that conclusion?

[Arutyunyan] If you remember, during the very first few days—and this help was coming in during this time—the airport at Leninakan was working virtually without lights for navigational purposes and illumination because there was no electricity. The airmen displayed heroism. Obviously part of this heroism was a departure and an attempt to fly in by night in order to bring help to Leninakan. As far as I know, one of the wings of the aircraft caught on a hill. It would seem that there were some navigational faults or mistakes, and this led to the accident. I do not think there are any grounds for any kind of statements or doubts in this respect.

[Mavisakalyan] The second question was linked with the question of why the first secretary of Armenia's Communist Party was not included in the commission from the very first days, as far as I understand it.

[Khodzhamiryan] I imagine that now that the second period has started, when an enormous quantity of housing has to be built and colossal problems have to be solved, social and national economic problems and so on, I imagine that now it is simply natural that the first secretary of the Central Committee should belong to the Politburo commission. From the very first he has been working with the commission, without a break. To be frank, we have now learned that he was working officially with the commission from the very first day. The important thing is that people ahve been working day and night from the very first second that the earthquake happened. [passage omitted]

[Paramonov] Paramonov, APN. What is the mechanism for the distribution of overseas aid, and who bears personal responsibility for this?

[Khodzhamiryan] A special commission has been formed to distribute and organize this aid. It distributes it among the disaster areas. This is published in the press in our republic. There has already been the third, I think, or the fourth item published about what has been sent where, and in what quantities. The appropriate rayon soviets of working people's deputies are responsible for the distribution of this locally. Distribution between the rayons and service areas of the Ministry of Trade, say, or the consumer cooperatives is the responsibility of the Ministry of Trade and the consumer cooperatives of Armenia respectively. As far as what we are distributing is concerned, we are distributing foodstuffs, groceries, industrial goods. All the tents—and emergency housing has also been received—these are also distributed by the relevant supply organizations and are erected in the localities. I have to say that an enormous amount of work here is being done by the Red Cross Society. The Red Cross Society has given us assistance in obtaining all these medical preparations; effectively it has organized this work, and all the medical equipment, medical appratus, and medical preparations and treatments, and so on—all of those things are being placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Health at the appropriate depots, the drugs directorate, and the medical equipment directorate, and is distributed among the hospitals, the polyclinics, and the treatment centers by the republic's Ministry of Health.

[Mavisakalyan] I imagine that Dzhanik Artashesovich Dzhanoyan, the minister of finance of the republic, will answer the financial part of the question.

[Dzhanoyan] The first thing is that as of today R756 million have been paid into the 700 412 account—and the money is still coming in. Besides that 4.8 million transferable foreign currency rubles have been received here at the Vneshekonombank branch in Yerevan. Many people have made contributions to the bank locally. That sum amounts to $1,050,000. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified questioner, in English with superimposed Russian translation] A question from the London INDEPENDENT. A question to the minister of internal affairs. Has the earthquake drawn people's attention away from the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, or do you still have problems with ensuring public order connected with the Karabakh problem?

[Arutyunyan] Public order in the republic is generally normal.

[Mavisakalyan] Connected with event is Nagorno-Karabakh, you understand.

[Arutyunyan] I understand. At the present moment public order in the republic is not being violated. There are isolated cases, say, where well-known curfew provisions are violated, but these are not decisive at the present time, or significant. Overall I am able to say that no conflicts and no problems arose on interethnic grounds in the process of this natural disaster.

[Unidentified correspondent in English with superimposed Russian translation] A great deal has been said in the Soviet press about the scandalous quality of building in the earthquake zone. We all imagine that efforts wil be made to restore and rebuild the town in a different way. But this will require a good dal more money and careful research. Bearing in mind the need for building the right kind of buildings in the earthquake zone, what is your assessment of the resources that will be indeed be required to restore and rebuild those towns? And a further question about the refugees from Armenia in Azerbaijan, and from Azerbaijan in Armenia: What is the policy at the present time with regard to these refugees? It has been said that you have been trying to encourage them to return home, but that those who do not want to return—will they be allowed to settle permanently in the new places?

[Artsryni] I would not want to describe the quality of construction in the way that it has been described by the person who put the question, although of course there is a problem in the republic as far as the quality of building work is concerned. Our main trouble is the fact that the buildings which were destroyed were built to standards calculated to withstand force 7 and force 8 shocks, whereas the shock that took place in the earthquake zone was 2 points higher than this. Furthermore, I must tell you that large-panel houses built by the local house-building combine to withstand force 8 and force 9 shocks virtually all survived in Leninakan. In the main it was frame-built houses, which in no way were designed for such a shock, that were subjected to damage. This does not mean that there are no problems with building quality there. A decision has been made to set up a government commission which must study the situation as regards the quality of building work and put forward the appropriate proposals and conclusions. The commission is a very competent one. It includes specialists from throughout the Soviet Union, and I am confident that it will deal with matters thoroughly and resolve all the issues in a qualified way. However, I would not rush into making conclusions about the reasons why buildings were destroyed.

[Mavisakalyan] What about the assessments of future construction work?

[Artsryni] Some very serious work is being done today on microseizmic zoning in order to establish the forces that can be expected in different zones of the republic, primarily in the zones where large-scale restoration work is to be undertaken. And the planning and the building work will be carried out to meet the forces determined by the scientists.

[Mavisakalyan] Thank you. The second question concerned the refugees. What is the situation in that respect?

[Arutyunyan] The question was about whether conditions will be created in which they will be able to return?

[Mavisakalyan] Yes.

[Arutyunyan] I can state officially that all measures are being taken in the two republics to return to them the homes and all the living conditions that they had before they left, and it seems to me that these conditions will be fulfilled both in Armenia and in Azerbaijan.

[Mavisakalyan] And conditions for them to be able to lead a secure existence in the republic?

[Arutyunyan] Security conditions will be ensured, both in Armenia and in Azerbaijan. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified questioner, in English, with superimposed Russian translation] How many people have been arrested for nationalist reasons in Yerevan since the earthquake?

[Arutyunyan] Thirty-six people were detained and arrested in the disaster area following the earthquake for theft of public and private property. I am referring to the full period. Investigastions into these cases is continuing. Certain material has been placed in the hands of the court. There are cases of petty theft, there are more substantial cases, but overall they do not reflect the true state of affairs because at the same time one can give thousands of examples where inhabitants, staff of the internal troops, say, or staff of the militia, representatives of the Army have brought out items of value: For example, 1.5 kilograms of gold was brought out of an industrial enterprise, and 600 grams of gold was recoverd from a dental clinic and returned. During the disaster a large number of individuals who were being kept in places of confinement were let out in order to enable them to visit relatives and friends, and to bury their dead. One prisoner who was looking for those close to him found R38,000, which he returned to the state. Once again I repeat, one can give dozens and hundreds of similar examples. And here it has to be stressed that it is not the sums that are important—people have been bringing in R5 and R10, such trifles that at first sight you couldn't imagine anyone would want, but people brought them in. I think, therefore, that singling out especially the things that have been done by those arrested is somewhat incorrect in present circumstances.

[Gerasimov] Nevertheless, the correspondent wants to add something:

[Correspondent, in English with superimposed Russian translation] How many people were arrested in Yerevan following the earthquake for nationalist reasons, and what charges have been brought against them?

[Arutyunyan] The fact is that people have not been arrested for nationalist reasons. There are people who have been detained under administrative procedures for violating public order, and there are about 10 people so affected. This means they have been detained for 30 days—it is administrative detention; they have not been arrested.

[Unidentified questioner, in Russian] A question from the Associated Press agency. Last week, Academician Andrey Dmitriyevich Sakharov made a visit to Armenia and Azerbaijan in order to seek a compromise solution to the so-called Karabakh question. I would like to ask the following question: Do you welcome assistance and advice from him in this matter?

[Khodzhamiryan] I have met Academician Andrey Dmitriyevich Sakharov. We had a fairly thorough conversation on questions related to the earthquake, on questions concerning the provision of assistance to the victims of the earthquake, on the situation in the disaster areas he has visited—he was in Spitak, in particular, he saw the situation there, and so on, on site—and our conversation was fairly thorough and wide-ranging on these issues. His advice on these issues we accepted with gratitude. It is certainly useful, we took it immediately. Some things we put right because he had seen shortcomings there with his own eyes. That always happens, but we did not discuss other issues with him. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified questioner, in Russian] The Politburo report says that it will take about 2 years to eliminate the consequences of the earthquake. This was also been mentioned today. In this connection, I have the following hypothetical question: How much time would Armenia need to eliminate the consequences of such an earthquake if Armenia were not an integral part of the Soviet Union?

[Khodzhamiryan] We believe that if Armenia were not a part of the Soviet Union we would simply not be able to eliminate such consequences. No doubt they would remain with us for a very, very long time. [video shows journalists in Moscow putting questions via television link to participants in press conference in Yerevan studio]

Mother Theresa on Aid

LD3012155888 Moscow TASS in English 1458 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] Moscow December 30 TASS—"We arrived in the Soviet Union to help the Armenian people after their devastating earthquake, to bring them our tenderness, love and compassion", Mother Theresa, mother superior of the Order of Charity, said at a meeting with the Soviet Health Minister Yevgeniy Chazov on Friday in Moscow. On the part of Soviet medical personnel the minister expressed deep gratitude for her relief aid to the victims of the catastrophic disaster.

On Thursday Mother Theresa returned to Moscow from Armenia where she visited devastated regions and nursed ill and wounded people.

"After visiting the worst-hit regions I came to the conclusion that despite the enormous destruction, the earthquake has united the Armenian and all the Soviet people", Mother Theresa said in an interview with a TASS correspondent. When my sisters and I got to know about the tragedy we decided to help Soviet people to quickly recover. My sisters will continue to help earthquake victims in one of the Moscow hospitals. Four sisters will be working in Armenian clinics for about another half a year. On New Year's eve I would like to address all Soviet people with the words: "Love each other like God loves you", Mother Theresa said.

Mother Theresa (Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu) who is now 78 years of age gained worldwide respect for her charity and peace-keeping work. She was among those who initiated the Order of Charity in Calcutta in 1950. There are now more than 380 centres for people in need, schools for poor children and orphanages which were founded by the order in 87 countries. Mother Theresa has received the highest awards of many countries. In 1979 she even won a Nobel Peace Prize.

In August last year she visited the Soviet Union by invitation of the Soviet Peace Committee and the Russian orthodox church and spent some time in the new settlements near Kiev where the inhabitants of regions devastated by an accident at the Chernobyl power station were based. At that time she was awarded the medal "To a Fighter for Peace", the highest Soviet Peace Committee accolade.

U.S. Companies Send Aid

LD0201110389 Moscow TASS in English 0926 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Washington January 2 TASS—By TASS correspondent Andrey Fedyashin:

A campaign of assistance to Armenian quake-stricken population is going on in the USA. According to the data received by the end of the last year, American citizens handed over 1,089,000 dollars to the Soviet Embassy in Washington alone.

The U.S. business community is most active in giving assistance. Vladimir Cheklin, vice president of the U.S.-USSR Trade and Economic Council, told TASS that by December 30 leading U.S. industrial companies had handed over nearly eight million dollars in cash, medicines, equipment, foodstuffs and other prime necessities.

Philip Morris, a leading U.S. company, flew more than 70 tons of protein-rich foodstuffs and over four tons of medicines to the population of Armenian stricken areas. The pharmaceutical firm Eli Lilli and Company dispatched to Armenia one million dollars worth of antibiotics. The Johnson and Johnson firm transferred 600,000 dollars worth of medicines and antiobiotics. The Bahter Company putting out medical equipment airlifted to Armenia blood transfusion equipment to the sum of 800,000 dollars. The Eastman Kodak firm allocated over 150,000 dollars to purchase food for Armenia.

The heavy engineering company Caterpillar, a leading producer in the world in this field, flew to Armenia one of its largest heavy-duty excavators worth 250,000 dollars, as well as its spares and service personnel.

The European and U.S. branches of the Ford Motor Company allocated 350,000 dollars to aid Armenia.

Assistance transferred by the U.S. chemical concern American Syanamid is assessed at one million dollars. The Pepsico Company handed over a cheque for 100,000 dollars for Armenia the other day. The Nabisco Company supplied 100,000 dollars worth of foodstuffs.

Paper Condemns Armenian Strike Activities

PM0201114189 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 25 Dec 88 p 2

[Report by special correspondents P. Voshchanov and B. Utekhin under the rubric "Economics and Morality": "Strike"]

[Text] Yerevan, Moscow—Armenia has been hit by a disaster. The losses are great, but the most serious and irreplaceable loss is the loss in human lives. There is no more important task today than to save the living and rebuild what has been destroyed. But what is this? Some leaders of the "Karabakh" committee are again calling for strikes and demonstrations!

In October 1987 the first rally of the "Karabakh movement" was held at Yerevan's Pushkin Park. It was small—no more than 250 people.

But by February 1988 up to 700,000 people were gathered in front of the opera theater. Many enterprises were forced to suspend operations. Since that time the terms "square" and "strike" have become inseparably linked. Just as, incidentally, many other things that were hitherto hidden or went unnoticed in the peaceful, day-to-day life in Armenia.

There is a certain city square. It has suddenly emerged from the depths of history. It speaks out. It adopts decisions. It is cited as an incontrovertible authority. It is the Theater Square in Yerevan. The Armenian forum. References to it are as natural as references to an official resolution. Behind the present-day square there is an unusual, forgotten force, and its origin is by no means immediately clear. It was the square which decided whether people should strike or work. Therefore the peculiar mechanism of the strike can be understood only by taking a close look at the phenomenon of the square. By subjecting the threads which lead toward it and away from it to a close examination. Incidentally, people have been looking at it closely for some time now. More than once this has resulted in attempts to oversimplify the phenomenon, to reduce the crowded square to a common denominator. The simplest versions were particularly popular: Someone is manipulating the "forum." Pulling the strings, you understand, and the masses obediently follow suit. This led to another thought: The rallies, strikes, and other "extraordinary" events are skillfully inspired by someone.

Nonetheless it would not be entirely correct to assume that the tens of thousands of people from all over Armenia who gathered in front of the theater followed any other but their own free will. "The square has become more popular than football," a Yerevan citizen said jokingly. How did this come about?

To begin with, people came in search of information. The square turned into a huge, living, people's newspaper, and the people who gathered there had one main and common interest—they wanted to know. Respect for people's right to know the truth became the symbol of restructuring. However, in the difficult situation which arose out of the Karabakh problem, this symbol moved into the background, ceding ground, and installing itself exclusively on the piece of asphalt surrounding the Yerevan theater. People could not bear staying at home, they could not live without it, and so they went in droves, through the crush, shoulder to shoulder, to the small square. Because that is where people were speaking (truths, or half-truths, who knows, but those who spoke won a monopoly on words, on information, without even lifting a finger) and they were speaking about what people wanted to know. There were no calls for strikes yet, but people were already leaving their posts to hear what was being said in the square.

Did Armenia prepare for this; was it premeditated? Probably not. The guys at the Yerevan Relay Plant metal shop did not suspect that in a day or two they would not go out to work in the morning. Neither did the thought cross the mind of Andronik Karapetovich Shirinyan, Yerevan Relay Plant chief engineer, that in a day or two the working class would stop working. Why all of a sudden? How could it happen that people suddenly come out on strike? As a leader, he was, of course, familiar with the problems of absenteeism: A person gets drunk, fails to appear for work—generally speaking, it is quite obvious what is happening. But in this case people simply failed to report for work. All of them. How did this come about?

Let us try to understand this by returning to the square. Incidentally, the forum as a phenomenon is no simple matter. After all, the events in Sumgait also began in a square, following a rally. The square—gathered into a fist—listens to and obeys whoever knows how to handle it skillfully. It is perfectly simple: The square engenders a need for immediate and unconditional democracy. Yet it becomes immediately obvious that we are not yet ready for this most simple and probably most effective level of democracy. We do not know how to handle it. And what we end up with is not always democracy. One of the sides monopolizes the rostrum and refuses to budge come what may. Now you try and work out who is speaking and whether his thoughts are good or evil. That is not even the problem, really. There may be all kinds of thoughts. Inevitably, there will be good ones and bad ones. The problem is that for many years we were being led into the square and expected to think unanimously, approve wholesale, and applaud in unison. We have not developed an immunity to the square yet. We still support and applaude whoever is speaking at a given moment. We find it hard to cope with when one speech is at variance with another. We will respond, if you like. But when it comes to making a choice—please, spare us....

If the square becomes subordinated to one voice this means the downfall of democracy. Who needs such a restructuring? What consequences, what gambling with public opinion has this produced, and may yet produce? Not necessarily in Yerevan or Baku. But in Tyumen, Moscow...

The leaders of the so-called "Karabakh" committee set the tone in Theater Square. The "unofficial" nature of this committee suggests some kind of conspiracy: secret rendezvous, leaflets, clandestine "cell" meetings at enterprises... Nothing of the sort. All work was conducted completely in the open. For instance, Vartan Ivanyan, an engineer at the Yerevan Relay Plant and one of the movement's aktivists, after consultation with like-minded people in the square returned to the enterprise and agitated among the workers. At many enterprises special committees were set up to facilitate the organization of protest actions. Each shop or section had a representative on these committees. This led to the formation of a chain linking the "Karabakh" committee, the square, and enterprises. As a result, the influence of the Theater Square spread instantaneously from the center to the periphery, prompting action. Essentially this amounted to a peculiar mechanism of parallel power with its own apparatus and ready-made management methods. We did not hear about any cases of people being forced to strike by means of crude pressure and ultimatums. The pressure, however, was there in the shape of public opionion itself, in the shape of the decisions adopted in the square. If you dare to refuse, you are immediately branded as an outsider, you are on your own. At the Yerevan "LYUKS" Footwear Factory which did not strike for a single day, the Komsomol committee secretary tried his utmost to convince us that there had been strikes, that his factory had been idle just like the others. The secretary was desperately trying not to look different, he was afraid that the journalists might try to brand his factory as a model of obedience. And here is another indicative example (we cite from a resolution of the Sovetskiy Armenian Communist Party Raykom published in the newspaper KOMMUNIST).

"On 12 October 1988 at 1500 a group of workers employed at the leather and haberdashery factory gathered at the factory gates and tried to persuade workers who had just finished their shift that they should demand that a meeting of the collective be called immediately, that the mass outages should be legitimized, that wages for days which had not been worked should be paid, and that the labor collective council should be reelected. These actions were provoked by "Karabakh" committee aktivists employed at the factory.... G. Tashchyan, the enterprise director, intervened in the tense situation, arguing that the heightened demands were unlawful. His arguments were rejected by the aforementioned comrades.... The "Karabakh" committee aktivists, employed at the factory, put pressure on the director, threatening that they will denounce him in Theater Square. This had a very adverse effect on Tashchyan's health. He subsequently succumbed to a heart attack...."

Yes, a new, strong current has emerged which has radically changed our life. The majority of people are carried along on this current which has produced a lofty ideal, a uniting force, as it were, which people greatly missed in the past decades.... Should there be a strike? Let there be a strike! But what about the economic consequences of the strike, what about the absence of pay, what about the appreciable lowering of the living standards of the strikers' families? Did the organizers of the strike think about that? The "capitalists" who are used to strike actions would be greatly amazed if they learned that workers at the relay plant are subsequently trying to catch up, having to work nights, third shifts, weekends.... Administrative staff at the Yerevan Relay Plant, most of whom disagreed with this form of protest and continued working, came up against the question: How could they draw wages if there had been no output? Ultimately they agreed that would draw a proportion of their wages that corresponded to the monthly plan fulfillment percentage. However, there were other cases where management encouraged the workers to strike, telling them: Nothing can happen to you, ordinary workers. Meanwhile the leaders drew their wages in full....

The relay plant is an enterprise which is doing well, economically. But what is to happen to people whose plant or factory is barely making ends meet? The Armelektromash plant, for instance, which is teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. Several hundreds of workers may be faced with the need to look for new jobs. Does this worry people? And how! But it was here that the strike movement was particularly active. As a result the plant failed to deliver R70 million worth of output in August alone. How should people react? Should they stop striking and go back to work? The management, on the other hand, might be thinking along different lines: It could be too risky to close down the bankrupt plant while passions are running high. Maybe help will come from somewhere....

The republic kolkhozes and sovkhozes made their own assessment of the situation. They kept working, although there is no less compassion and concern about the Karabakh problem in Armenian villages than in the cities. Agitators have visited peasants more than once and appealed to their "national sentiments and solidarity." Is it perhaps bacause in the countryside the link between work and whether people will have anything to eat is more obvious? This is what we came to hear in Nizami village in Masisskiy Rayon: "We have been working and will continue to work. What will happen if we do not go out into the fields? We will put the republic on starvation rations. Will people thank us for this? If we do not feed ourselves, who will feed us? It would be too humiliating to have to beg."

Economic scientists, on the other hand, decided to join the strike at the height of the events.... A rally was held, and heated speeches were made.... It is true that shortly before, according to G. Arutyunyan, chief of the Armenian Communist Party Central Committee Economic Department, the selfsame scientists submitted a program for the economic development of the republic for consideration by the Central Committee which did not stand up to criticism. Yet it was a key national program! Where were the lofty feelings which induced the economists to join the strike when they were compiling this program?

The square forced people to make allowances for it. It has little to offer as regards forms of "work with the masses," because by virtue of its nature it calls for slogans and battle cries rather than analysis and deliberations.

Thousands of people were shouting in Theater Square in Yerevan.

Thousands of people were shouting in Lenin Square in Baku.

Fists clenched, arms raised. People's eyes reflected the flames of the bonfires. Yes, the square is a force. But as far as we remember, in the course of history this force, as a rule, served to destroy rather than to build....

Quite true, there is a great deal of food for thought. During the first 9 months of the current year alone, Armenia lost 1,667,000 days in working time. The shortfall in production totals several hundred million rubles. Considerable damage has been inflicted on enterprises in other parts of the country. Armenia occupies the last place in the country in the fulfillment of the contract commitment plan. During the 9-month period targets for the production of 50 percent of the 65 types of most important goods to be exported from the republic were not met. This is the external aspect of the matter. In Armenia itself the financial position of all enterprises that joined the strike, without exception, has deteriorated. Since this is the case, where is the money for workers' wages to be found? Average wages in the republic are now considerably lower than last year. There is also indirect damage. There is the concept of a firm's prestige in economic terms. Beyond the borders of the republic a rather cautious attitude toward concluding contracts with Armenian partners has now been adopted. In conditions of economic accountability the consequences of this may turn out quite painful for the republic.

Many social programs have also been disrupted. As a result of the strike, the relay plant lost R700,000 from its material incentives fund. Armenia does not produce all its food itself—meat and milk, for instance, have to be imported. This has to be paid for. And where is the money to come from? It cannot be claimed that the food supply situation in Yerevan and other cities is disastrous. However, beyond any doubt, it is worse than a year ago. And the market has immediately raised its prices.

The trade unions have lost several million rubles as a result of the sharp reduction in the influx of tourists into the republic. Rest homes and sanatoriums were empty for the greater part of the year. Pioneer camps were closed—in the turbulent situation Yerevan inhabitants were loath to let their children depart for distant destinations. All this also amounts to damage which is not always calculated in rubles.

"For us the strike is the only peaceful means of protest," Vartan Ivanyan, Yerevan relay plant engineer and "Karabakh" committee activist, explained. "It is our way to draw attention...." Attention to what? It appears that this serves "to draw attention" above all to strikes and the strikers rather than the problems which gave rise to them.

As time goes own, the square will be more and more ready to explode into a strike. It is a well-trodden path now.... At a factory in Masisskiy Rayon there was the strange case of the poisoning of several dozens of women workers. It is true that something untoward happened there which must be investigated. But soon afterwards an immigrant couple from Baku was hospitalized with food poisoning after eating bad chicken. Again people were outraged. The couple was brought to the party raykom in the square and shown to people to prove that they were well and suffered no lasting harm. But the crowd insisted: You have been poisoned, only you are not aware of it.... Then came the story of the "poisoned" bread which the party raykom secretary had to consume in front of everyone, the "poisoned house" where a prosecutor had to spend a night.... In short, a chain reaction of rumors and hearsay...

Who stands to gain from this?

It is hardly possible to doubt Armenia's concern for the fate of the Armenian population of Karabakh. The sincere desire of rally and strike participants to have their voice heard is not subject to question either. But is it possible to be confident that there are no forces interested in maintaining the tension in the republic? We put this question to practically everyone we talked to. The answer is—no. How many forces did the investigation of murders, fights, and other incidents in Baku, Sumgait, and certain other parts of Armenia absorb? It is true that people have become more united, that a goal has appeared for the sake of which bureaucrats, corrupt managers, speculators, and honest workers are prepared to march together. But is this not an illusory unity? What will happen tomorrow, "when all of them are bonded together" by blood. Blood is already flowing....

At the Yerevan market we asked a solitary Azeri (in the past there were many more of them): What has happened? He shrugged his shoulders: "A rumor circulated in the village that people should not come to Yerevan. It is dangerous." "So what happened to the crop?" "People came from Yerevan and bought everything up. Only at painfully low prices." And the prices at the market are sky-high! Was it not the same middle-men who are making money now, who spread the rumors about the dangers which lie in store for the Azerbaijanis in Yerevan? The upshot was a chain reaction of animosity. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth...

What lies ahead? Will there be only two squares filled with people? People who were workers, engineers, doctors, and teachers at one time, but now are just like one face with eyes filled with the red reflections of the flames of the bonfires.

A closer look at the strikes reveals interesting similarities. Enterprises of the machine-building complex, where working conditions are hardest and where the proletariat is most united, were most frequently and most actively involved in strikes. Strikes were least frequent in the light industry where work is individual and pay is high. The "Lyuks" experimental footwear factory, for instance, did not lose a single day through strikes. Those who wanted to, attended rallies after work, but in the morning they again came to their workplaces. Work at the factory is considered too prestigious to risk losing your job.

It is all a question of the mechanism. Strikes are essentially a vestige, a consequence of past or existing methods of the administrative system, methods which have already been condemned. Recently, talking to a Polish journalist, we asked him: "Do workers of enterprises which have switched to the lease contract strike?" It appears they do not. Did the cooperatives in Yerevan come out on strike? No they did not. Our colleague assured us: "I am convinced that in Poland there will be no disruptions to work if the economic reform is carried through to its end."

So, exerting pressure on the state ultimately means exerting pressure on yourself, or on Ivanov [Russian equivalent of John Doe] who lives in Moscow or Tambov....

"Yes, we see and read how workers, just like we are, 'ordinary guys' are asking: Why should we suffer because of the Armenians?"—lathe operator Oganes, leader of the Yerevan relay plant "strike committee", said. "And we want to ask these people what have they done for us? What do they know about our problems?"

The question being posed is not "why are we not with you" but only "why are you not with us?" That, incidentally, is also a possible interpretation of worker solidarity. In our opinion "the worker from Tambov" has every right to be indignant. After all, he did not place anyone in a difficult position. But on the other hand... he has no idea, strictly speaking, about the essence of the problem. It has long ago stopped being a limited problem; it is a statewide problem now. It has become so painful that it has long exceeded the borders of the two republics. "What has happened? Why are you at each other's throats?"—people in Moscow, Kiev, and Tbilisi are asking, people whom the ethnic strife has affected in one way or another. They must be told the truth. They must see the consequences of the trouble which unexpectedly shattered the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

They must know so that they can form their own opinion. Otherwise they will go to their own square tomorrow and light their own bonfires.

And there are quite a few people who are ready to warm their hands at such a bonfire. However, its flames afford no warmth, give no succor. They are only capable of burning down, of depriving people of their roofs....

...This article was removed from the newspaper when the terrible news came from Armenia. It seemed to us then that there could be no question of a resumption of the strikes. However, the latest reports from Yerevan state: Certain leaders of the "Karabakh" committee are again provoking unrest in the city and inciting workers at Yerevan enterprises to strike. Clearly, the emerging consolidation of national forces in the republic, the region, and the whole country is not to some people's liking. The consolidation which has sprung from the great tragedy and grief in Armenia.

It is no secret today that our country has incurred great losses in connection with the elimination of the consequences of the earthquake. They are running into billions. It will depend on each one of us how they will be reflected in the implementation of our social programs. So against whom are the strikes directed? Against those who have suffered in the tragedy. And against those who share in Armenia's grief.

"Strike!"—the "leaders of the national movement" in Armenia are calling. They are aware: This "blow" will hurt more that the previous ones. After all, hundreds of thousands of people have lost their near and dear ones. Many have no roof over their heads. There is no work. For many life will henceforth be divided into two parts—before and after the earthquake. Grief made these people vulnerable, sensitive against any injustice, against the smallest mistake, against dishonest words. Is this not the basis of the calculations of those who use the Armenian national interests as a cover merely to gratify their political ambitions?

Situation in Azerbaijan Continues To Normalize

Baku Commandant Notes Peace

NC0101111089 Baku Domestic Service in Azeri 1700 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Notice by Colonel General Tyagunov, military commandant of the Baku City Special District, issued 31 December]

[Text] Peace prevailed in Baku yesterday. Harmony has been secured before the New Year with regard to the conduct of daily life and activity in the city. Public law and order has not been disrupted.

Comrade residents of Baku: Thank you for the many warm congratulations, which continue to be received. On behalf of the special committee of the military units of the special rayon, allow me to sincerely congratulate you on the occasion of the New Year. Allow me also to wish you sound health, security, happiness, as well as great success in work, education, and creating initiatives.

[Signed] Colonel General Tyagunov, military commandant of the Baku City Special District.

'Peace' Continues in Baku

NC0201181089 Baku Domestic Service in Azeri 1700 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Notice by Colonel General Tyagunov, military commandant of the Baku City Special District, issued 2 January]

[Text] Peace continues to prevail in Baku. There have been no serious violations of public law and order during the first days of the New Year. A total of 52 individuals were detained and 10 automobiles impounded as a result of the violation of curfew hours during the night of 1-2 January.

Establishments, transportation services, and educational centers resumed normal operations on 2 January.

[Signed] Colonel General Tyagunov, military commandant of the Baku City Special District

Baku Commandant on Village Status

LD0201105889 Baku Domestic Service in Azeri 0300 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Announcement by the military commandant of Baku City Special District]

[Text] The situation in the city has not changed. On the eve of the New Year, Comrade Gurbanova Salatyn Zeynal Kyzy, a resident of (Neovadi) village in Kafan Rayon appealed to me about the unfavorable situation in the village. On 1 January, Colonel (Rokhlin), military commandant of (Nakhichevan) Special District reported that communications were restored in (Neovadi) village thanks to measures taken, and its electricity supply was also restored.

A control post, manned by officers, was set up under Major (Kovsh) in order to maintain public order in the village. The raykom first secretary, together with Lieutenant Colonel (Orlov), (Megri), special district commandant, went to (Neovadi) to give necessary assistance to the residents of the village. Of the 270 families of (Neovadi) village, not one has left.

[Signed] Colonel General Tyagunov, military commandant of Baku City Special District

Commandant Reports Returnees

NC3012195388 Baku Domestic Service in Azeri 1700 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Notice by Colonel General Tyagunov, military commandant of the Baku City Special District, issued 30 December]

[Text] Peace and a businesslike atmosphere prevails in the city. According to Lieutenent General (?Makachev), military commandant of Yerevan city, by 29 December Said Namazov, Nedzhadi Namazov, and another 17 persons had returned to the town of (?Tefekkue) in Amasiyskiy Rayon; Mushdak Dashdamirov and another five persons had returned to the town of (?Komisiyan); Ari Abbasov, Sait Umbeti, and another four persons had returned to the town of Amasiya; Emin Ismaylov and another six persons had returned to (?Talasiya) town; Bayram Namazov and two more persons had returned to (?Dukkan) town; Elman Yusupov and another person had returned to the town of (?Gollu); Kyamran Orudzhev, Timsal Kurbanov, and another five persons had returned to the town of (?Aktala) in Alaverdskiy Rayon; 200 people had returned to the town of Kalinova in Kalinin Rayon, and seven had returned to Medovka.

[Signed] Colonel General Tyagunov, military commandant of the Baku City Special District

New Group for Handling Inquiries

NC3012192488 Baku Domestic Service in Azeri 1700 GMT 29 Dec 88

[Notice by Colonel General Tyagunov, military commandant of the Baku City Special District, issued 29 December]

[Text] The citizens of Baku and the republic have been appealing to me and to the military commanders of the special district to inquire about their relatives in the Transcaucasus republics. Up to this point, a group to handle the inquiries was working within the framework of the command headquarters of the special district, and a large number of the appeals have been responded to as a result of the measures put into effect.

The Hope Inquiry group, made up of workers from the Azerbaijan SSR Komsomol Central Committee and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, including a representative from the military command headquarters, has now been set up to take over the work of handling inquiries, and the original group affiliated with the commandant of the Baku City Special District has concluded its work.

In order to make inquiries about their relatives, find out where they live, and acquire information about the residents of the rayons suffering from the earthquake, all citizens are requested to telephone the Hope Inquiry group at the following numbers: 92-79-57 and 92-78-97.

[Signed] Colonel General Tyagunov, military commandant of the Baku City Special District

Official Says Armenians 'Provoke' Azerbaijanis

NC0301091889 Istanbul MILLIYET in Turkish 26 Dec 88 p 7

[Kamuran Sumercan report: "Armenians Are Provoking the Azerbaijanis"]

[Text] The Hague—Khabib Mamedovich, who is a lecturer at the Azerbaijan SSR Academy of Sciences, has said that the Armenians are provoking the Azerbaijanis because they want to set up a completely independent republic. He added that the Armenians have resorted to everything to realize their goal.

We met Mamedovich in The Hague. He said that the Armenians were using the Nagorno-Karabakh problem to create incidents in the region so as to convince world opinion that the Soviets and the Azerbaijanis are massacring them. Mamedovich asserted that Armenians who know the Azeri language extremely well have infiltrated the ranks of the Azerbaijanis in order to provoke them. He claimed that dogs with the photographs of famous Azerbaijani artists and other prominent figures hung around their necks were being allowed to wander about in the streets. He also said that Azerbaijani cemeteries had been destroyed.

Baku Gorkom Elects Officials 28 Dec

LD3112134788 Baku Domestic Service in Azeri 0204 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] The Baku Gorkom, elected at the 47th Baku party conference, held a plenum on 28 December.

The plenum elected Muslim Mamedov as first secretary of the Baku Gorkom; (Golubov) was as elected second secretary and Kasumova as secretary of the Baku Gorkom. Agayev, Vezirova, Kasparyan, (Kolobov), Guseynov, Karakashly, Kasumova, Mamedov, Nadzhafov, Shapovalov, and Shchedrin were elected as members of the Baku Gorkom bureau.

Comrades Vezirova, Guseynov, Polyanichko, and Tatliyev participate in the work of the plenum.

A meeting of the auditing commission of the Baku party organization elected by the 47th party conference was held. Sardarov was elected chairman of the auditing commission.

New Azeri Language Paper Printed in London

NC0301090689 Baku Domestic Service in Azeri 1300 GMT 28 Dec 88

[Text] An Azeri language newspaper, AYDINLIK, is now being printed in London by Azerbaijanis living there. AYDINLIK's objective, carried in the newspaper's first edition, is to report on the Azerbaijani people's history, culture, literature, and fine arts for the Azerbaijanis living in foreign countries.

Death of 'Dissident' Daniel Announced in Bonn

LD3112145888 Hamburg DPA in German 1437 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Moscow/Bonn (DPA)—Soviet dissident writer Yuliy Daniel died on Friday aged 63, the "Continent Society" announced in Bonn on Saturday. This cultural association in support of human rights in Eastern Europe gave no details as to the cause of his death.

Daniel, together with Andrey Sinyavskiy, was arrested in 1965 for publishing "anti-Soviet literature" abroad and among friends, and was sentenced 6 months later to 5 years' imprisonment. Poems by Yuliy Daniel were published in the Soviet Union for the first time in 1988. [passage omitted]

Babenko on 'Reassuring' Political Results of 1988

LD3012202088 Moscow TASS in English 1903 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] Moscow December 30 TASS—By TASS political news analyst Yevgeniy Babenko:

The year of 1988 has undoubtedly been a major positive milestone in the development of the international community. There was a serious improvement in East-West relations, above all in USSR-U.S. relations, which was illustrated not only by the sides' statements on good intentions, but also by concrete deeds: the two countries are already destructing nuclear missiles of two classes in accordance with the INF Treaty, which entered into force on June 1. Our adversaries say: Well, only a small share of the huge nuclear arsenals is being liquidated. Yes, we answer, but the main thing is that the disarmament process has begun in practical terms, which is really unprecedented in world history.

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at the United Nations was a major international event, and this is recognized everywhere. A whole package of peace initiatives, based on new political thinking, was put forward in that speech. The West's response to the Soviet leader's speech shows that the ideas and proposals, made in the speech, are treated with profound attention there, including at the highest state and government levels. We are witnessing elaboration of a concept for establishing an inter-connected and integral world, a world with progress to be made in the interests of all mankind, a world marked with mankind's consensus in advancing to a new world order.

The idea of humanisation of international relations is struggling through the thick of sterotypes and encrusted layers of the past. This is evinced by the unprecedented aid to the people of Armenia coming from the world community which has come closer together in the face of the disastrous earthquake in Transcaucasia.

The past 12 months witnessed major progress in peaceful solution of a number of regional conflicts, including in Afghanistan, Kampuchea, and South Western Africa.

The year of 1988 was eventful, indeed. But turning the last sheet of the calendar, we do not idealize what has been done over that period to improve the international political climate, and we do not diminish the results attained.

In the year of 1988 mankind's life became calmer, with more hopes appearing for the year of 1989. Isn't that reassuring?

Yefimov Views Agenda for Reform in Coming Year
LD0201144989 Moscow TASS in English 1433 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Moscow January 2 TASS—By TASS news analyst Igor Yefimov:

The year 1989 will undoubtedly hold a special place in the history of the USSR. The political system of Soviet society will be radically restructured this year. The main purpose of the reform is to create a structure of power that would enable the working people to really influence state affairs.

The model of the new system of power, just as the entire programme of political restructuring, was worked out at the 19th all-union conference of the Soviet Communist Party held in the summer of last year. The schedule of the reform has also been established. This year will see the main stages of the reform.

The structure of the supreme power will be changed in the first quarter of the year. Nomination of candidates to people's deputies of the USSR is under way all over the country. Following the elections fixed for March 26 the Congress of People's Deputies, the new supreme body of state authority, will be convened in April. It will elect the permanent Supreme Soviet and president of the Supreme Soviet who will be the country's highest official.

It should be noted that the election campaign started on the eve of 1989 is conducted in a fundamentally new way. The recently adopted amendments to the Constitution and the law on the election gave guarantees that during the elections the people will be able to manifest its true will.

The second stage of the reform is the stage of harmonising relations between the republics and central authorities. Political and economic powers of union republics are to be expanded considerably. These important matters will be discussed by a plenum of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee planned for mid-1989. Familiarisation with the overall plan of the transformations in nationalities relations will be possible at the beginning of the second quarter: It has been decided to publish in good time the theses of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee for the plenum for discussion.

Alongside with the practical restructuring of inter-ethnic relations, a reform of the system of local government bodies is to be started in the second half of the year. The reform will be implemented in republics, territories, regions, as well as at the level of settlements, cities and districts. Elections to republican and local soviets of people's deputies are planned to be held at the end of the year so that they should start working in their renewed form by December 1989.

The legal reform started by the recent publishing for countrywide discussion of the draft new principles of the country's legal legislation will be implemented throughout the year. It is planned to formulate draft laws on local self-government, on youth, the rights of trade unions, on voluntary societies, on the press, and other legislative acts widening political rights and freedoms and guaranteeing their implementation.

So the year 1989 will be a year of important changes for the Soviet people. The process of restoration of power to the working people started on the initiative of the Soviet Communist Party's leadership is entering a decisive phase.

Public Prosecution Official on Law, Order
LD0101230389 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1800 GMT 1 Jan 89

[Text] Our correspondent Anatoliy Fedorov invited Sergey Amsimovich (Samoylov), senior assistant to the USSR chief public prosecutor, state justice counsellor, second class, to speak.

[Fedorov] Sergey Amsimovich, what has the last year been like for the main department tasked with maintaining law and order in our country?

[(Samoylov)] A complicated and hard one, like the previous years. You see, to struggle against crime and other violations of the law is above all a battle for truth, for the restoration of justice. A struggle like that is not easy, and winning it is even less so. Only people who have no idea about the work of the prosecutor's office can think that its cautioning and injunctions, protests and representions, sanctions and other acts in response to violations of the law come about easily and simply. No, as a rule they are the result of a great deal of intense work, always conducted in the context of too much work to do and a terrible shortage of time. What can one say when one has to make decisions in these extreme conditions?

The Nagorno-Karabakh problem required that additional law maintenance forces be drafted in the struggle against violations of the law in Armenia and Azerbaijan. It required the investigation of numerous dangerous crimes, committed in a situation where national enmity was incited by nationalistically minded circles who do not like all the changes and active restructuring throughout our economic and social life, people who are striving to do everything they can to put the brakes on that restructuring. Many public prosecutors and investigators of the prosecutor's office from other republics and oblasts are, just as before, in the Uzbek SSR to render assistance in the investigation of crimes involving abuse of official position and economic crimes.

[Fedorov] These days it is fashionable to talk about mafias and organized crime, and it is difficult to believe that all these disgraceful things were going on in this republic alone.

[(Samoylov)] You are quite right. And the affair of Churbanov and others is naturally one of many. In Kazakhstan the same sort of things are being investigated, and in Krasnodar, in Moscow, and in a number of other places. A great additional burden has been laid on the shoulders of the staff of the prosecutor's office also with regard to the rehabilitation of individuals who were unlawfully the victims of the Stalinist repressions. Thousands of cases are waiting to be checked. And this work can by no means be postponed.

[Fedorov] Sergey Amsimovich, you have given 36 years of your life to work in the prosecutor's office. You have seen a great deal. What are your wishes for your colleagues, especially the young ones?

[(Samoylov)] I would like to wish the young staff of the public prosecutor's office the following first and foremost: that they should not be afraid of difficulties and that they should be irreconcilable in the struggle with any law violations, no matter who committed them.

Stalin Memorial Group, Culture Ministry Clash

LD3112181088 Moscow World Service in English 0410 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] [First Announcer] Radio Moscow reporter Yelena Circissiyan has attended a news conference here arranged by the founding committee of a national historical society dedicated to setting up a center to commemorate victims of the Stalin repressions, and in the long term to eradicate all vestiges of those years from Soviet society. [London THE INDEPENDENT in English on 28 December reported that the news conference took place on 27 December] Here is her story:

[Second Announcer] The committee called the news conference because it has clashed with the Ministry of Culture over the matter of what sort of a memorial center there should be. The committee believes that besides the memorial itself there should be a research center, a library and archives; the idea being not only to honor the memory of the dead, but to warn against any repetition of the lawlessness, and judging by comments in the media the general public supports this purpose. But the Ministry of Culture recently announced a competition for the best project for nothing but a memorial, making no mention of a research center, library or archives. This surprised the movement, because it announced a similar competition quite some time ago and has already received the first projects.

Speakers at the news conference said it would be reasonable not to launch any new contest but to take an active part in the one already in progress. They also felt that the ministry's concept of a memorial center showed a lack of respect for public opinion.

The cochairman of the movement, Yuriy Terekhin, pointed out: The cochairman said the movement had the support of the great mass of people who had been confined in prison or camps in the Stalin years and these people were taking an active part in forming the society. Contempt for their opinion and initiative could not be tolerated. The conference of the Communist Party last summer, he said, had not only supported the idea of creating a memorial center but had shaped a policy to further democratize society, and the decision of the Culture Ministry challenged this policy. According to Yuriy Terekhin the movement believes that there should be cooperation between the authorities and public organizations on this matter and not confrontation.

One of the executives of the movement's archives and research center, (Mariya Ter-Chudekova), singled out the Culture Minister Vasiliy Zakharov for criticism: She pointed out that the personal responsibility of anyone taking decisions was much greater now than it was a few years ago. Minister of Culture Vasiliy Zakharov should be asked why he hadn't consulted with the public organizations concerned.

So is an official view going to prevail over the public view once again? Well let's think not. The very fact that the memorial movement was able to arrange such a news conference shows that the public now has the chance to stand up for its views.

Solovyev Addresses Leningrad Conference

PM3012145388 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 26 Dec 88 Second Edition p 3

[TASS report under the rubric "At the Party Conferences": "To Utilize the Working People's Energy"]

[Text] The best of the best were sent as delegates to the 23-24 December 28th oblast party conference of Leningrad's Communists, heirs of the 1917 Red Guard. The energy of revolutionary renewal generated by October still imbues the present, when time is rigorously taking everyone to task in terms of his contribution to restructuring and prompts us to turn time and again to the treasury of Leninist experience. The registration of delegates took place in the Smolnyy Institute's historic Assembly Hall, where Soviet power was proclaimed and its first decrees adopted. A V.I. Lenin Memorial Museum was opened in the headquarters of the revolution, where Vladimir Ilich spent 124 days leading the country's life. These historical events are the yardstick enabling us to appraise our work exactingly today.

The purpose of this large collective council of Communists was to analyze and sum up the proposals made during the report and election campaign. The Leningrad Center for the Study of Public Opinion conducted a sociological poll. Over 6,000 Communists and nonparty people returned the questionnaire "What Is Your Attitude Toward Restructuring?" Many of the replies emphasized that special importance is attached to the intensification of party influence on the solution of restructuring problems. On the eve of the conference, special telephone lines were installed which anyone could use to address questions and remarks to the party forum. This dialogue between city and oblast residents and the conference in the Tauride Palace continued while the conference was in session. Party obkom secretaries and delegates answered callers' questions in the information center during breaks between sittings.

A profound critical analysis was the distinguishing feature of the report delivered by Yu.F. Solovyev, candidate member of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo and first secretary of the Leningrad party obkom. He presented delegates with a broad panorama of the political and organizational activity of the Leningrad party organization, with more that 600,000 Communists in its ranks, in implementing the tasks of restructuring and the decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress and the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference.

Having embarked on unprecedentedly large and complex work, the speaker said, the party took on responsibility for the fate of the country and the fate of socialism. This predetermined the nature of the set tasks. Life itself demanded radical changes in the cadre policy pursued by the oblast party organization—resolutely overcoming formal bureaucratic and administrative methods and broadly introducing certification and electability of leaders on a competitive and multicandidate basis.

Fundamental changes have also affected the cadres pool for promotion. It is formed in an atmosphere of democracy and glasnost. The oblast has a public pool from which it can draw all CPSU gorkom and raykom officials, including secretaries, and economic leaders. But some party organizations do not exercise proper influence on the selection of cadres. A number of collectives have nominated noncontroversial and "convenient" people rather than those who are businesslike and enterprising.

Communists have played an important role in improving the work of soviets, trade unions, the Komsomol, and other public organizations. Important positive processes are now developing within soviets, and the activeness of deputies is being boosted. Leningraders have been given broad opportunities to find out about the work of sessions and draft decisions to be adopted and to submit their suggestions and additions. At the same time bureaucratism and departmental fragmentation are still difficult to overcome.

Economic accountability, economic management methods, and the activity of labor collective councils have a growing influence on working people's creative activeness. It would seem appropriate that these processes should have a positive effect on the content of work by trade unions, especially as regards the protection of working people's interests. This year, however, there was a sizeable swelling of the flow of letters to the party obkom, reporting instances of wholesale and unjustified reduction of workers' wages and increase of earnings norms linked with the transition to new wage rates and salary scales. This produced acute labor conflicts in some enterprises. There are more than 100,000 Communists on elected trade union organs in Leningrad and the oblast. It is incumbent on party committees to channel their efforts toward enhancing the role played by labor collectives in production and sociopolitical life.

The party obkom's attention, Yu.F. Solovyev noted, was focused on the course of democratization, glasnost, and the restructuring of all spheres of social life. The activity of numerous public organizations, amateur associations, and hobby clubs has a growing influence on the shaping of a fundamentally new ideological situation. They have cast new light on many acute problems of Leningrad's socioeconomic development. The population's activeness helped in reviewing environmentally harmful projects and stepping up the preservation of the architectural appearance of the city's historical center and brought back to us the ideas of charity and humanism.

Internationalism and a keen sense of mutual assistance, which have always been part of Leningraders' character, are in full swing now, in the tragic days for the fraternal Armenian people, with hundreds of thousands of people rendering specific and effective support to the victims of the unprecedented earthquake.

Leningraders' spiritual life today is largely governed by a revival of relations between the intelligentsia and all other strata of the population. The intelligentsia is making a greater contribution to the shaping of the new thinking and is playing a more active role in solving many problems with major social implications. There was a certain amount of success in the last 3 years in overcoming the residual principle in the distribution of resources in the cultural sphere. At the party obkom's initiative, public discussion of the most important projects of monumental architecture and urban development was adopted in practice.

Young people, who represent one-fifth of the population in Leningrad and the oblast, are a dynamic force of restructuring. Their education has been and remains an important element of the oblast party organization's political work. Nevertheless, there are numerous omissions here. Crime among adolescents is not declining. The nurtural function of educational establishments is extremely constricted. There has been a sharp decline in the inflow of young cadres into the material production sphere. Time emphasizes the special importance of shaping a correct historical awareness among young men and women. No matter how harsh the lessons of the past might be, young people must learn them. We have much to be proud of, we have much to tell about the people's heroic accomplishments during the years the socialist state was establishing itself. But we must not forget that the present is also part of history and that it can teach us a lot. This is where the party obkom relies on an active stance on the part of the social science departments of Leningrad's VUZ's and on the effective assistance of party, war, and labor veterans' councils.

The obkom's organizational, political, and ideological work encouraged party and Komsomol organizations and soviet and economic organs to really accelerate the socioeconomic development of Leningrad and the oblast. This was taken into account when shaping the basic guidelines of the Leningrad party organization's activity. The Leningrad Oblast's economy achieved stable acceleration during the current 5-year plan period. We are beginning to recover from the complex precrisis situation in which it found itself during the late seventies and early eighties, largely as a result of expanding the scale of the development and introduction of modern technologies and enhancing the role played by academy, sector, and VUZ science. Within 3 years, the average annual growth rate of labor productivity in industry has been exceeded by 70 percent and the decline in the return on capital has been slowed by one-third compared with the previous 5-year plan period. The fact that output growth has been to a certain extent secured on the basis of resource savings and that labor productivity growth has been achieved through an absolute reduction of the number of employees testifies that party and economic organs have succeeded in intensifying the trend toward industry's transition to a more intensive path of development.

There has been a considerable increase in the volume of production of nonfood consumer goods. For the first time the oblast's economy has achieved a faster growth in the manufacture of this output compared with the overall growth of industrial production. Additional resources were discovered to increase the volume of commissioned housing, hospitals, health centers, kindergartens, and schools.

Nevertheless, when appraising the economy's development from the positions of restructuring, it must be noted that the results which have been achieved are rather a positive trend than a fundamental breakthrough based on efficient utilization of deep-seated acceleration factors.

Next year the entire national economic complex of the city and the oblast will switch to work in new economic conditions. Preparations for the next major step in the restructuring of the economic mechanism were expeditiously adjusted by the CPSU obkom with help from competent specialists and leaders. Objective analysis proves the need for restraint in assessing the work that has been done. Even though enterprises' autonomy has increased, standards of contractual discipline have been raised, and the growth rate of labor productivity and profits has been accelerated, the effectiveness of the new economic methods is still far from adequate.

The new economic mechanism posed the problem of strengthening ties between the region's enterprises and science. This is the purpose served by the two major intersector associations—"Energomash" and "Tekhnokhim"—set up in Leningrad on the initiative of the party obkom and a group of economic leaders. Bearing in mind Leningrad's mighty industrial, scientific, and technical potential, such fundamentally new organizational structures are highly promising in terms of ensuring technological breakthroughs along the main avenues of scientific and technical progress. It was decided to set up a council of party organization secretaries from intersector associations. It is important to ensure that their attention is focused on key questions concerning the organizational establishment of new structures, their accelerated socioeconomic development, and the formulation of an efficient cadre policy.

The party obkom also backed the initiative of a number of labor collectives from construction industry organizations to set up a construction industry committee as a single regional management organ in Leningrad and the oblast. It will most fully embody the principles of democratization of management and consolidation of the economic autonomy of basic production links.

The oblast party organization's policy of organizing direct foreign economic ties and setting up joint enterprises is being implemented. A number of such firms are in existence, including the Soviet-West German "Lenvest," the Soviet-Finnish "Konsofin," and others. Foreign economic contacts are being established not only in industry but also in trade, consumer services, public catering, the construction industry, and science. Now that the soviets of people's deputies are being given real powers to manage economic activity, it is important to realize that initiative and responsibility for the expansion of mutually advantageous ties are exclusively in their province.

People expect real improvements, and everything must be done to ensure that they sense these improvements as soon as possible. This is the party obkom's principled stance. The most important questions of the food and housing programs, increased output of consumer goods and services, and the improvement of the ecological situation have been comprehensively examined at plenums, at bureau and secretariat sessions, and by the CPSU Obkom's Council for Economic and Social Development and Acceleration of Scientific and Technical Progress. Measures for their earliest possible solution have been mapped out.

The initiatives of the Leningrad party organization and local soviet organs on priority problems are supported by the party Central Committee and the government. Specifically, the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Council of Ministers adopted resolutions on the accelerated retooling of light industry enterprises, on environmental protection in Lake Ladoga and Nevskaya Guba, and on conversion of a number of plants.

Significant changes have taken place in the agro-industrial complex since the start of this 5-year plan period. Its material and technical base and its social sphere continued to develop. The oblast set up its first agro-industrial combine, the "Tosnenskiy." Contract and lease forms of labor organization are being introduced. The city's machine-building enterprises are involved in developing highly productive soil cultivation and harvesting machines and attachments. The question of the storage, transportation, and processing of agricultural produce is acute. A party obkom plenum and sessions of the Leningrad City and Oblast sessions mapped out ways to eliminate economic mismanagement and imbalances in storage and processing.

Many unsolved problems remain in the housing construction sphere. The party obkom developed a plan for its expansion in the city and oblast. It provided the basis on which the Leningrad Oblispolkom and Gorispolkom developed the "Housing-2000" Comprehensive Program. The task set for the current 5-year plan period is to commission about 230,000 apartments. A new impetus has been given to housing construction using the own-resources methods. An important initiative was developed by the collectives of "Energomash" and "Tekhnokhim," the Baltic Shipping Line, and the "Kirovskiy Zavod" and "Burevestnik" associations which set up a planning and construction association on joint stock principles.

The intensification of the social orientation of the region's development depends entirely on economic successes. Party committees must focus their attention on providing political and organizational backup for the 5-year plan targets and the introduction of economic accountability, self-financing, and a modern form of labor organization and incentives everywhere. Finishing touches will be put to the management structures of soviet and economic organs, and the optimal model of territorial economic accountability is being sought. The most important task, demanding unflagging attention by the party, is still the acceleration of scientific and technical progress on the basis of implementing the "Intensification-90" Territorial-Sectorial Program.

Problems of the implementation of political and economic reforms and the enhancement of Communists' responsibility for the fate of restructuring were discussed by debate speakers V.P. Smirnov, radio equipment adjuster at the V.I. Lenin Optical Engineering Association; Academician Zh.I. Alferov, director of the USSR Academy of Sciences A.F. Joffe Physics and Technical Institute; L.A. Kutogribova, team leader on the "Leningradskiy" sovkhoz; A.N. Gerasimov, first secretary of the Leningrad party gorkom; B.V. Gidaspov, chairman of the "Tekhnokhim" Intersector State Association Board and general director of the "Gosudarstvennyy Institut Prikladnoy Khimii" Science and Production Association; and others. The speakers advocated the need to enhance the party's vanguard role in all spheres of society's life and to intensify its influence among the masses.

V.S. Babichev, deputy chief of the CPSU Central Committee Party Building and Cadre Work Department, took part in the conference' work.

A plenum of the Leningrad CPSU Obkom was held to examine organizational questions. Yu.F. Solovyev was elected first secretary of the Leningrad party obkom.

Interethnic Center Set Up in Kazakhstan

LD0201150189 Moscow TASS in English 1442 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Alma-Ata January 2 TASS—An inter-ethnic relations centre has been set up in Alma-Ata, the capital of Soviet Kazakhstan to find ways to improve ethnic and inter-ethnic relations in the Soviet Union. The centre unites scientists, party workers, economists, cultural workers and public figures.

"Such a centre is particularly important for Soviet Kazakhstan whose population of 16 million is made up of representatives of more than 100 nations and nationalities," Uzbekaliy Dzhanibekov, secretary of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party, told TASS.

He said that serious errors in the nationalities policy led to anti-social actions in Kazakhstan in December 1986. The Kazakh leaders were tolerant to manifestations of nationalism, nepotism and patronage in selecting personnel.

Uzbekaliy Dzhanibekov linked ethnic problems with social-political, economic and moral ones. Therefore, he believes that an active social policy, such as housing construction, for instance, could improve life in Soviet Kazakhstan. More than 750,000 families, twice more than previously planned, will move to new apartments by the end of 1991.

Fundamental changes are taking place in cultural life. Instruction at schools is conducted in the Kazakh, Russian, Uigur, Uzbek and Tajik languages. Some ethnic groups study German, Korean and Tungan as well as their native languages.

Books and newspapers are published in six languages and television and radio broadcasting are conducted in five.

Kazakhstan is implementing government programmes to improve the teaching of the Kazakh and Russian languages and the publication of dictionaries and textbooks.

Voss Interview on Anniversary of USSR Formation

LD3112181188 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 0615 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Interview with Avgust Eduardovich Voss, chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet by unidentified correspondent; date, place not given—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Correspondent] Esteemed Avgust Eduardovich, 66 years ago, on 30 December 1922, the delegates of the first all-union Congress of Soviets adopted a declaration and treaty on the formation of the USSR. What is the historical significance of that document today?

[Voss] [passage omitted] Thanks to the joint efforts of the peoples of our homeland in the postwar years, we were able to restore the destroyed national economy in a historically brief space of time and to take a big stride forward. In the course of these processes, the nations and ethnic groups, and also the interrelations between them, underwent a qualitative socialist transformation. In this context, the nationalities question, which remained from the past, the nationalities question—in the narrow sense of the phrase, so to speak—as the question of the elimination of the oppression of nations, of their lack of equal rights and effective inequality, was resolved. Here we can speak with pride of an outstanding and truly unique achievement of socialism.

[Correspondent] How, in that case, do you explain, for instance, the deterioration of relations surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh, the events in Alma-Ata, and those in the Baltic area?

[Voss] You need to seek the cause of these events in the miscalculations and mistakes of development in the sphere of nationalities committed in our country in the past. In the period of the cult of personality and the years of stagnation negative processes developed on a broad scale. For many years inattention was manifested to the specific socioeconomic and cultural requirements of nations and ethnic groups, acute issues, presented by the very process of development of the nations and ethnic groups, failed to be resolved in a timely way and, let's face it, there was an underestimation of manifestations of ethnic egoism and arrogance; attitudes of dependence and the pursuit of narrow local interests. Phenomena brought about by command-administrative methods and by encroachments on the rights of nationalities—phenomena that had amassed for decades—became deeply entrenched, and in a number of regions assumed the characteristics of conflict. A manifestation of this are the events in the Transcaucasus and the Baltic region that you mentioned. It is time to repudiate the proposition that ethnic processes are problem-free. Here too, the new cuts a path for itself via contradictions and struggle. The 27th CPSU Congress created the conditions for the renewal of our policy on nationalities, and for the restoration of its Leninist norms. [passage omitted]

The desire to widen the rights of the republics in the economic sphere is fully justified and natural. Changes in this sphere are long overdue and they are fully in line with the idea of restructuring. Supercentralism prevents us from making rapid headway; it fetters local initiative and stifles local incentive. But let us not go to the opposite extreme. To ensure republican and local financial autonomy, general legislative norms are needed, and there must be an identical understanding of financial autonomy by both union and republic bodies. Only this will ensure that it rests on a single system, and creates equal conditions and opportunities for all republics. Questions of environmental conservation and a number of other issues should be tackled on the same basis. [passage omitted]

Preparations are currently under way for a CPSU Central Committee Plenum devoted to the development of relations between nationalities. It is too early to speak of specific results, but directions and approaches have been defined, and they are beginning to be implemented. In his report at the 19th All-Union CPSU Conference, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev stressed that life has confirmed the correctness of the idea enshrined in the way our great union was organized: The aggregation and unification of efforts have allowed each nation and society as a whole to make a speedy headway, and to attain new targets of historical progress. Questions of relations between nationalities should also be viewed from the angle of the development of the Soviet multinational state. Here there should be no extremes, petty regulation of the life of the republics from the center, or repudiation of the principles of democratic centralism in the relations between the union and the union republics. It is from such a standpoint that many normative acts regulating the interaction of the union and the union republics should by assessed. It is already clear that the rights of the union and autonomous republics, and other national entities, will need to be amplified in the direction of widening them and enhancing responsibility.

Certain steps have already been taken in these directions. The extraordinary session of the USSR Supreme Soviet of the 11th convocation adopted very important alterations and additions to the USSR Constitution. The Law on Elections of USSR People's Deputies was adopted. In the course of their formulation, discussion, and adoption, the concerted interests of the republics were taken into consideration. Thus, membership of the Committee for Supervision of the Constitution for representatives of all the union republics has been stipulated. They have also been granted the right to apply to this body in the event of a violation of republican authority by departmental acts. Questions which the union bodies have the right to consider—alongside their obligatory consideration by the relevant state bodies of a given union republic—have been stipulated. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] What is new in the proposals regarding the functioning of the Soviet of Nationalities, Avgust Eduardovich?

[Voss] It will naturally have special responsibility for the development of our federation. The Soviet will comprise USSR people's deputies from the national territorial constituencies and the USSR people's deputies from public organizations, in accordance with the following quotas: 11 [as heard] deputies from each union republic, four deputies from each autonomous republic, two deputies from each autonomous oblast, and one deputy from each autonomous okrug.

In fulfillment of the decision of the USSR Supreme Soviet on further steps to implement political reform in the sphere of state construction, the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium and the Legislative Proposals Commissions of the chambers have set up a working group, made up of Supreme Soviet deputies representing all the union republics, and involving scholars and experts—economists, sociologists, and lawyers. It has been instructed to prepare proposals for delimiting the jurisdiction of the USSR and the union republics in the interests of upholding more fully their political and socioeconomic interests, harmonizing relations between nationalities, and taking maximum account of the tasks of the further development of the whole country.

To conclude our conversation, I should like to say this. We are all united in the belief that the interests of our peoples are served by the motto: A firm union means a strong center and strong republics. That is why we will spare no effort in ensuring that in our common home, the USSR, all nations and ethnic groups feel good, that they have the opportunity of freely developing their national traditions, language and culture, that they strengthen cooperation among themselves in all areas of life, and that they cherish and build on the Leninist legacy and internationalism. As was stressed at the recent session of the USSR Supreme Soviet by Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, all the peoples of our country must have the confidence that in the USSR problems that worry them will be tackled in a fraternal way, on the basis of respectfulness and mutual understanding.

Moscow World Service To Broadcast in Russian

PM3012144388 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian
30 Dec 88 First Edition p 8

[Report on interview with A. Plevako, chief editor of the Information and Propaganda Main Editorial Staff of Central Radio Broadcasting to Foreign Countries, by V. Kuznetsov under the rubric "Greeting 1989": "Moscow Radio Speaks in Russian"; date, place not given]

[Text] Among the more than 100 countries which beam radio broadcasts to a foreign audience, the voice of Moscow Radio carries a great deal of weight on the world's airwaves. In terms of the volume of broadcasting it considerably surpasses the BBC or the Voice of America, for example. Approximately 100 million people throughout the world listen to broadcasts from Moscow. It broadcasts in 63 languages, and as of 1 January 1989, another will be added to them—Russian. Moscow Radio World Service is beginning its work in Russian.

"Why will foreign broadcasting suddenly start in Russian?" We put this question to A. Plevako, chief editor of the Information and Propaganda Main Editorial Staff of Central Radio Broadcasting to Foreign Countries. The new service comes under his jurisdiction.

"I would put the question differently: Why has Moscow Radio hitherto not broadcast in Russian? For Russian is one of the most widespread languages in the world," Aleksandr Sergeyevich said. "According to UN data, up to 215 million people outside the Soviet Union can speak it. It is being studied in 108 countries: from the United States to the small African Republic of Cape Verde. There is tremendous interest in the Russian language in the world. Yet until now Moscow Radio has remained the only radio organization on a world scale not to broadcast abroad in its native tongue. We already have a number of popular world services: English, French, German, Spanish, Chinese. It is very good that Russian has been added to them."

[Kuznetsov] Many Soviet specialists now work abroad. They too will certainly be interested to hear a voice from the motherland....

[Plevako] Of course. And not only them. Let us not forget that in various years millions of our compatriots have ended up abroad for one reason or another. Many of them avidly await news from the USSR and want to understand what is happening here now.

[Kuznetsov] As I understand it, the problems of restructuring will be determining the features to be included in the new service' broadcasts.

[Plevako] Undoubtedly. We will endeavor to offer our foreign listeners the opportunity to learn what ordinary people and statesmen think about events in the country and in the world, what problems our scientists and writers are arguing about, what is happening in interstate relations, how the political reform is being implemented, what are the successes and difficulties of the radical economic reform.... We will speak of ecology, youth affairs, space exploration, the spiritual life of Soviet people.... In general, everything about the way we ourselves live. At the first stage the total volume of Russian-language broadcasts will amount to 10 hours a day.

[Kuznetsov] Is it important not only what is broadcast but also how?

[Plevako] This is of special significance in foreign broadcasting. For we have to face tough competition on the world's airwaves. I must admit that previously in our broadcasts we frequently tried to present our society as problem-free and, perhaps, as somewhat sicky sweet. Listeners sensed this insincerity and reacted in their own way by switching to other stations. Listeners' letters are a sensitive barometer. The flow of letters to Moscow Radio between the midseventies and the mideighties fell by half.

But life is changing, and broadcasts are changing too. Moscow Radio is being restructured and becoming more frank, sincere, and attractive. The number of letters has once again increased over the past 2 years.

On 1 January we will for the first time wish our foreign listeners all the very best for the new year in Russian.

New Latvian Broadcasting Complex Opens

LD3112141688 Moscow TASS in English 1411 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] Riga December 31 TASS—A new radio and television complex will enable the residents of the Soviet Baltic republic of Latvia to watch New Years's gala concert. The last of the planned transmitting stations began to operate today.

The complex, built on one of the islands on the Daugava, consists of a 368 metre transmitting tower and a 20 storey building housing television studios.

The new communications centre ensures a steady reception of three televison and four radio channels in the republic, including two channels of stereophonic broadcasting.

Radio Carries 'Experimental' Panorama Program

LD3012215288 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1930 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] The first experimental evening Panorama on our radio is coming on the air. In the next 2 hours, until 0030 Moscow Time (2130 GMT), journalists Aleksey (Arzhanov), Tatiana (Filipova), and Nadezhda (Ryasova) will keep an eye on our editorial teleprinters and present a roundup of the latest, up-to-the-moment news. We plan to make use of materials that are perhaps not quite the latest news but are nonetheless topical and that analyze the state of our economy on the eve of the final transition of industry to financial autonomy set to begin, you recall, as of 1 January.

An economist and representative of the State Statistics Committee, who will tell what is worth and not worth giving to bookworms in the New Year, will take part in our Panorama. We will also report on ancient traditions that are more and more actively being revived in our country today. We will touch on New Year traditions abroad. And, of course, there will be a lot of good music for all tastes. Our music editor is Olga (Messerikova). The producer of our Panorama is Konstantin Doronin. He is assisted today by sound technician [name indistinct] (Davydova), and engineer Aleksandr Molchanov. Commentator Pavel Kasparov is conducting the Panorama.

Ukrainian Encyclopedia To Remove 'Blank Spots'

LD3112121888 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0630 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] Kiev, 31 Dec (TASS)—The first of the five volumes of the "Ukrainian Literary Encyclopedia" has been published.

"There has not yet been such a fundamental work on questions of fiction, Igor Dzeverin, director of the 'Taras Shevchenko' Literature Institute of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, told a TASS correspondent. It is planned that all volumes will appear before 1994. The encyclopedia will describe the history of, and current, Ukrainian literature, its ties with the literature of the fraternal peoples of the USSR and with the literature of Ukrainians living abroad".

The authors have done everything in order to remove the "blank" spots in Ukrainian literature and to restore the good name of the writers who were subjected to repressions and unjust accusations.

New Publication Created for Cooperatives' Ads

LD3112120188 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 0900 GMT 31 Dec 88

[Text] (KLIP), a new bulletin of advertisements by cooperatives, by state enterprises, and by individuals, has appeared. It is published by the Planeta Creative, Production Cooperative Agency. It is Moscow based, but includes advertisements from other cities. It costs 30 kopecks and comes out twice monthly.

The address of Planeta is Moscow 103009, Ulitsa Gorkovo, house No 6, block 6. Telephone: 292 69 27.

Tajik Party Session Changes Newspaper Name

LD0301101189 Dushanbe Domestic Service in Tadzhik 0020 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Summary] The Tajikistan Communist Party Central Committee Bureau held its regular session on 28 December.

The bureau adopted a resolution on changing the name of the republican newspaper, KOMSOMOL-I TAJIKISTAN [YOUTHS OF TAJIKISTAN] as of 1 January 1989.

Bishop Allowed To Return to Vilnius

LD0201145889 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1325 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] Vilnius, 2 Jan (TASS)—The government of the Lithuanian SSR has permitted the 77-year-old Julijonas Steponavicius to return to discharge his duties as apostolic administrator of the Vilnius Archbishopric. Since 1960 he has been living in the small town of Zagare, Joniskis Rayon, in the charge of the local Catholic parish.

In 1960 Bishop Steponavicius, following charges of breaching the laws regulating religious activity levelled at him by the authorities, was deprived of permission to discharge the duties of apostolic administrator. The leadership of the Catholic church of Lithuania transferred him to Zagare where he has been living all this time.

Recently Steponavicius, together with other members of the episcopate of the Lithuanian Catholic Church, has on several occasions taken part in masses in Vilnius, by the cathedral which has been returned to the believers in the 'Ausros Vartai' chapel. He has also visited the Vatican.

Economic

Consumer Goods Exports From USSR Restricted

LD0101154889 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1430 GMT 1 Jan 89

[Text] The USSR Council of Ministers has adopted a resolution on regulating the export of certain consumer goods abroad. From 1 February 1989 to the end of 1990 the export from the USSR of color and black-and-white television sets, household refrigerators and freezers, washing and sewing machines, children's clothing and children's footwear, fresh and instant coffee, and the caviar of sturgeon and salmon, is prohibited. A number of goods will be subject to customs duty ranging from 20-100 percent of the retail prices of the goods. These include, in particular, certain household electrical appliances—vacuum cleaners, mixers, coffee grinders, and irons—household radio-electronic apparatus, cameras, and car accessories and spare parts.

The stated measures are applied with regard to goods being exported from the USSR by citizens who are permanently resident abroad and who have been in our country as tourists or on private business, including at the invitation of persons resident in the USSR. It is also stipulated that the aggregate value of consumer goods exported by one person from the USSR is not to exceed R 100 in retail prices current in the USSR. The main State Customs Control Directorate of the USSR Council of Ministers is charged with the task of giving timely notification about the aforementioned measures to foreign and Soviet citizens.

Customs Official Praises Measure

LD0301112989 Moscow TASS in English 1059 GMT 3 Jan 89

[Text] Moscow January 3 TASS—Valeriy Draganov, deputy head of the Soviet Customs Control Department, praised the decision of the USSR Council of Ministers to regularise the exportation of some consumer goods, in line with new customs regulations in Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, and Poland.

In an interview printed in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA newspaper on Tuesday, [3 January] Draganov pointed out that the question of customs relationships between the member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) has long been on the agenda, promoted by the resources of domestic markets. "The duty of any state is to protect its own market," he emphasised.

The newspaper recalls that the decision bans the taking of television sets, household refrigerators and freezers, washing and sewing machines, children's wear and shoes, coffee, sturgeon and salmon caviar out of the country from February 1, 1989, until the end of 1990. Duties will be levied upon a number of goods (these include some household electrical appliances, cameras, and household radio electronics).

Draganov explained that customs barriers within the socialist community have been necessitated by the economic situation. He gave the following facts: More than 400,000 television sets, more than 200,000 refrigerators and freezers and 50,000 washing machines had been taken out of the Soviet Union through customs checks from Arkhangelsk to Odessa within ten months of 1988.

"The list could be extended. It is no secret to anyone that these goods are among those in short supply in this country. A similar situation has developed in other socialist countries as well. Taking measures to regularise the exportation of goods will help solve many urgent problems in CEMA countries."

Will these measures resolve the problem of short supply? No, said Tatiyana Koryagina, head of a department of the Economic Research Institute under the USSR State Planning Committee, to the TRUD newspaper.

"It is naive to shift our economic troubles on to tourists," she said.

"Nevertheless, it seems to me," the economist went on to say, "that the decision is the right one. This is a logical measure to protect the domestic market which is by no means in the best condition. So, I find a certain logic in its decision."

Scientific

Work Aboard 'Mir' Spacecraft Continues

'Progress-39' Unloaded

LD3012135788 Moscow TASS in English 1250 GMT 30 Dec 88

[Text] Moscow December 30 TASS—TASS correspondent reports from the Flight Control Centre:

This year's last working week is coming to an end on board the "Mir" scientific research complex. Aleksandr Volkov and Sergey Krikalev are busy unloading the "Progess-39" automatic space vehicle today, which has brought over two tons of cargo to the orbit. It is also planned to check up some of the board instruments.

In accordance with the medical schedule Valeriy Polyakov had his cardio-vascular system checked today. The space complex's commander and board-engineer were subjected to similar check-ups somewhat earlier. The cosmonauts feel fine and are in a holiday mood.

Vladimir Titov, Musa Manarov and Jean-Loup Chretien will speak with the space crew on December 31. They are now undergoing medical check-ups and rehabilitation at Star City near Moscow.

Mineral Surveys Conducted

LD0201092089 Moscow World Service in English 0800 GMT 2 Jan 89

[Text] The Soviet crew on board the Mir orbital station has started a new series of experiments to study the natural resources of Siberia and the Soviet Far East. Aleksandr Volkov, Sergey Krikalev, and Valeriy Polyakov have been photographing remote areas that have been little studied by geologists so far. Of special interest for the crew are so-called circular structures where minerals are usually found.

Photos from orbit have made it possible to discover oil and gas in the Pamir Mountains and polymetallic ores near Lake Baykal.

First Tu-204 Aircraft Test Flight Completed

LD0201195689 Moscow Television Service in Russian 1530 GMT 2 Jan 89

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[Summary] The new Tu-204 passenger aircraft had its first test flight today. Special correspondent Leonid Elin reports from an airfield near Moscow.

[Elin] The 100-metric tonne aircraft is on the airfield. [Video shows aircraft in hangar, engineers checking instruments, Elin in the cabin]

The Tu-204 is to replace the well-known Tu-154. The Tu-204 is capable of taking 50 passengers more than the Tu-154. Its fuel consumption will be 19 grams of fuel per passenger kilometer. Its speed is 850 km per hour, its flight range is 3,500-4-000 km, and its crew consists of 3 people, consisting of 2 pilots and a flight engineer. [Video shows group of aircraft designers, the aircraft emerging on the airfield and then taking off].

[Elin] Here is a short interview with the general designer.

[General designer Tupolev; identified by screen caption] This aircraft, our Tu-204, belongs to a totally new generation. Everything in it has been made in an absolutely new way compared with those aircraft that are currently used by Aeroflot.

[Elin] Aleksey Andreyevich, what do you expect of the first flight?

[Tupolev] We expect to check the design parameters we have introduced in the aircraft. This is a very comfortable aircraft for passengers. Whereas previously the longitudinal spacing between seats was 750 mm, in this aircraft the spacing is 810 mm.

[Elin] That means that high speed will be supplemented by comfort.

[Tupolev] Yes, it is much more comfortable. Whereas the Tu-154, while carrying few passengers, consumes 6 metric tonnes per hour, this aircraft consumes only 3 metric tonnes per hour.

[Elin] Aleksey Andreyevich, of course, many test flights are yet to be carried out. However, when will the aircraft start flying along Aeroflot routes?

[Tupolev] According to the schedule and the directives that we have, we are to start carrying passengers at the end of 1990.

[Elin] The aircraft spent about 30 minutes in the air. The pilots and specialists said all systems are operating properly. Test flights lie ahead.

Gosatom Official on Nuclear Waste Disposal

PM2812150988 Moscow LITERATURNAYA GAZETA in Russian 28 Dec 88 p 9

[Interview with B.A. Semenov, first deputy chairman of the State Committee for the Utilization of Atomic Energy, by Aleksandr Istomin and Yaroslav Skvortsov under the rubric "Pertinent Response": "Where Nuclear Waste Goes"; place, date not given]

[Text] Concerned at the news that the State Committee for the Utilization of Atomic Energy [Gosatom] is preparing an agreement under which the USSR is to receive radioactive waste from the FRG for burial on USSR territory, a group of Moscow readers has written to the editorial board. At the request of the letter writers we approached B.A. Semenov, first deputy chairman of the USSR Gosatom.

[Question] How accurate is our readers' information?

[Semenov] The information that an agreement to bury radioactive waste from the FRG in the USSR is being prepared does not tally with reality.

We have agreements on scientific and technical cooperation with FRG organizations and firms, and there are contracts for the enrichment of natural uranium obtained from the FRG.

I would like to point out, however, that there is another kind of service which the Soviet Union really does provide. The thing is that nuclear power stations have been and are being constructed in many socialist countries and in Finland with the Soviet Union's assistance within the framework of economic cooperation. The Soviet Union supplies "fresh" nuclear fuel throughout the working life of these nuclear power stations, while spent fuel is taken back to be stored and processed. It is important to emphasize here that the fuel elements contain both uranium and plutonium which can be extracted and used at AES's, as well as certain useful radioactive isotopes which can be utilized in industry, medicine, and so forth. The waste remaining after chemical processing of the fuel and the extraction of useful components is the radioactive waste that has to be buried safely. There are various ways of doing this. One of the promising and adequately tested methods is to place this waste in hard glass which is resistant to any impact from the environment, blocks of which are then buried deep underground in stable, impermeable rock—in granite, for example.

[Question] Do you believe that fuel processing is a more acceptable variant from the ecological viewpoint too?

[Semenov] The majority of developed countries in the nuclear sphere have the technology for chemical fuel processing and for handling radioactive waste. These countries include France, Britain, the United States, Japan, and the FRG.

From the ecological viewpoint both methods make it possible to ensure the necessary reliability and safety.

[Question] Where on USSR territory is processed nuclear waste buried?

[Semenov] If you mean nuclear fuel or waste from its processing, the situation now is as follows.

We have the technology for processing radioactive waste, but we have not yet embarked on the broad industrial processing of nuclear fuel. Therefore, as in the majority of other countries which are developing nuclear power, we keep spent fuel in storage pits at AES's or in storage pits elsewhere, where this fuel "ages" and its radioactivity drops considerably. As processing capacities are commissioned, nuclear fuel will also be kept at plants where it is processed, while the waste will be converted into compact stable forms and then buried.

[Question] Do you know anything about cases of a particular country's territory being made available to other countries for the burial of nuclear waste?

[Semenov] As I have already said, France processes and stores radioactive waste (although it can also return it to the customer). It is also known that China has declared its readiness to bury other countries' radioactive waste on its territory and has conducted talks about this.

[Question] Under conditions of the increasingly acute ecological problem and a number of major accidents at nuclear power stations certain countries are curtailing their nuclear power development programs....

[Semenov] This may come as a surprise to your readers, but nuclear power is one of the ecologically cleanest energy sources. Therefore, to ensure the normal working of AES's, all the efforts of specialists are now aimed at significantly raising the safety level of AES's and developing a new generation of reactors.

From the editors: Today's feature reflects the opinion of a senior Gosatom official. We hope that other specialists will express their viewpoint on this serious ecological problem.